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DISCOURSES

ON

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

BY

ISAAC LEESER.

הלוא כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע:
ירמ' כג' כט'.

"BEHOLD! THUS IS MY WORD, SAITH THE LORD, LIKE THE FIRE, AND LIKE THE HAMMER THAT SHIVERETH THE ROCK."

Jeremiah xxiii. 29.

VOL. II.

FIRST SERIES.

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DISCOURSES

ON THE

JEWISH RELIGION.

DISCOURSE XXIX.

THE DUTY OF INSTRUCTION.

O Thou, who appointest to each man a destiny of good or evil as his ways may deserve, and who art ever ready to annul the evil decree, when the sinner returneth unto Thee with prayer and sincerity, receive now, at this season of forgiveness of sin, the supplications which we, thy people Israel, address to Thee in the countries of our captivity; and may our prayer be as acceptable before Thee, as was the sacrifice without blemish which was formerly brought to thy temple as an atonement for the transgressions of thy congregation. O save us from evil! O protect us from the contumely of the ungodly and the persecutions of the strangers to thy holy creed; and let thy grace be displayed over us, so that all inhabitants of the earth may see, that in truth we are called by thy name. May this be thy will. Amen.

Brethren!

Again by the favour of God we are permitted to assemble in this house of prayer, and to anticipate the approach of another Day of Atonement. To many of us new joys may have been dispensed in the year which has elapsed; but many have had to drink the cup of sorrow. Weal and wo have, as usual, chased each other in their circuit round our globe; and, perhaps, the distressed one has been gladdened by an unexpected enlargement, and the proud and he who conceived himself secure and firmly seated have been moved, and their grandeur rendered to naught, and their security been turned into tribulation. The picture here presented is an occurrence of every day of our life; but its instructiveness is not in the least diminished by its frequency. To him who does not take heed of what passes, the subversion of a world would hardly be more than a natural phenomenon; but to the mind alive to religious impression every event speaks of the unerring wisdom of God, which orders every thing for the wisest of purposes. To a mind so constituted nothing can pass unheeded; and from the evil no less than the good, instruction and improvement will flow unto him, since he always considers, that the hand of the Lord has done it. Even should he himself be the object, against whom the divine judgment is directed, it will cause him to reflect and ponder, and consequently to correct the defectiveness of his course, and thus it may truly be said, that to the wise and righteous light will beam out of darkness! But the thoughtless will receive the greatest blessings as a matter of course, and whatever of punishment he may meet with, he will either regard as a

personal injury done to his righteousness, or will pass it by without bestowing a thought upon it.—And behold the difference! The righteous is meek in prosperity and, however exalted, he sees a brother in the humblest of beings; and in adversity he meekly bends to the rod which is sent to chastise him; but the thoughtless transgressor is insolent in prosperity, and when he suffers he vents his wrath in imprecations and ill-humor, as though the Judge of all flesh could be driven to remove merited punishment by the waywardness of the obdurate child.—It requires but little penetration to distinguish between the better and the worse of these two principles of action, since our life is so constantly diversified by good and evil, by reward and punishment. But, alas! the thinking ones are the smaller portion of mankind, heedlessness and obstinacy are too often characterized as cheerfulness and firmness, and hence we see so little reformation produced by causes, which any disinterested witness would consider sufficiently powerful to call forth serious reflection. Thus it happens, that the chastisements which God sends, as our holy writings teach us, to warn us of our errors, but too often fail to have the good effect for which they are intended.—The Almighty, therefore, knowing the weakness of human nature, and also aware how much one man is apt to be influenced by the words and deeds of the other, and how much the cares of life tend to claim almost the whole attention, to the exclusion of every thing else, of each mortal, has set apart a portion of every year as a peculiar time for reflection and repentance, to fix, as it were, more emphatically the wavering fancy; to assemble all believers to unite by words and

acts in devotion and repentance, and to make this short period dedicated to the pursuit of penitence and of righteousness as our principal occupation. And well is this time chosen. For when we were the Israelites of Palestine, not given as now to trading and money-hunting as our chief pursuit, but to manual labor and agriculture, the beginning of the civil year was just the period of all the most congenial to piety. Behold! every man had finished his work in the field, his crop of grain and fruit had been housed, and his efforts blessed by the bounteous hand of God. If ever man can feel grateful, it is surely the time when he has ample cause to be so; and if ever he should feel repentance, it is when he has felt the evil effects of transgression. And as our land was always fruitful when we were righteous, and as punishment universally followed transgression: every one could easily feel, often even by the result of his harvest, if his and his neighbors' conduct had been in the spirit of godliness or not—Then again, it is the beginning of our year; and, therefore, it was proper then, and is no less so now, to begin a new period with extraordinary acts of devotion, and to repent, even if we should not be conscious of any aggravated sin in ourselves, of wrongs committed unwittingly, and of faults into which we may have misled others by unkindness of manner, or by indiscreet advice. It is, therefore, incumbent on us, so our wise and blessed teachers tell us, to pacify our offended neighbour before the Day of Atonement comes, so that he may not stand with aggrieved feelings of bitterness towards us, when he comes to ask forgiveness for his own sins; and to those who have the capacity, it is commanded to exhort the

brethren on this Sabbath of Repentance to a contrition of hearts, and a firm purpose to amend whatever of fault, stubbornness, and waywardness they may discover in themselves. And on this subject, we read the following in the book of Ezekiel (chap. xxxiii.): "And the word of the Lord came unto me as followeth: Son of man, say unto the children of thy people and speak unto them, A land, when I bring over it the sword; and the people of the land take one man from amongst them, and appoint him as their sentinel; and when he seeth the sword coming over the land, and he bloweth the cornet, and warneth the people; and if the hearer heareth the voice of the cornet and is not warned, and the sword cometh and taketh him off: his blood shall be on his own head—the voice of the cornet he hath heard and he hath not taken warning; his blood shall be upon himself; for he was warned and could have saved his life. But if the sentinel see the sword coming, and he blow not the cornet, and the people be not warned, and the sword cometh and taketh one of them: he hath been taken away for his iniquity, and his blood I will require of the sentinel."—And thus continues the prophecy:

ואתה בן אדם צפה נתתיך לבית ישראל ושמעת מפי דבר והזהרת אתם ממני: באמרי לרשע רשע מות תמות ולא דברת להזהיר רשע מדרכו הוא רשע בעונו ימות ודמו מידך אבקש: ואתה כי הזהרתו רשע מדרכו לשוב ממנה ולא שב מדרכו הוא בעונו ימות ואתה נפשך הצלת: יחז' לג' ז'-ט':

"And thou son of man! I have appointed thee a sentinel for the house of Israel, and when thou hearest a word out of my mouth,

thou shalt warn them from me. When I say of the wicked, Wicked one, thou shalt die; and thou speakest not to warn the wicked from his way, this wicked one shall die for his iniquity, and his blood from thy hand I will require. But thou, when thou hast forewarned the wicked from his way, to return therefrom, and he do not return from his way: he for his iniquity shall die, but thou hast saved thy soul." xxxiii. 7–9.

In the extract here presented to your consideration, brethren! you will see, that the duty to admonish others is one solemnly enjoined by God in his commands to his prophet. It is true, that the holy spirit is no longer displayed over the messengers of the Almighty, as palpably as it was in olden times; but the effects of the spirit, which was formerly poured out, are yet in existence, for the promulgated word is still in our hands, in our mouths, and in our hearts; and thus the command issued to Ezekiel to forewarn the sinner is yet operative even at this very day. In pursuance of this duty, I address you now, since unworthy as I am, I occupy for the moment the place of teacher in the community. No one is more conscious than myself, that my own course is not faultless; no one need tell me to take the beam from between my eyes; since I never would arrogate to myself the idea of perfection; but only as one brother exhorts the other to reflection do I wish to be viewed, as one of the people, guilty of the same derelictions, and actuated by the same sinful propensities, who himself derives instruction and correction through those labours by which he endeavors to benefit others. To adopt the simile of the prophet: the sentinel is not the less threatened by the sword, nor the less menaced by dangers, because he stands upon a tower to dis-

cover the danger at a distance, and because he has the cornet by his side to forewarn the townsmen of the approaching destruction.—Brethren! we all have sinned; and but rarely are we able to say with truth, that one entire day has passed over our heads, which we have employed in doing all the good we could, and avoiding all the evil which was avoidable. We have, perhaps, neglected to make ourselves acquainted with our duties; and our ignorance, through which we sin, has been a voluntary one; and we cannot claim an exemption from punishment by the plea of good intentions, and the not knowing of the hurtfulness of our doings.—Or perhaps we have haply discovered our faults, and have resolved to amend; but this determination has been deferred from day to day, and we are as bad as we were last year and the year before the last.—Seeing our misconduct, we may have thrown the cloak of hypocrisy, or the veil of extenuation over it; we may have considered our aberrations as unimportant, and which the Almighty would not notice; in short, we may have done every thing in our power to fancy ourselves good and virtuous without our being so, and consequently have persevered in a course which ought to have been abandoned; and have even wondered, to use the language of Isaiah: "Why have we fasted and God hath not seen, why have we afflicted our souls and He knoweth it not?" But it is entire blindness which causes us to argue in this manner, ay, a voluntary one even, for we might have reasoned better if we had taken proper means to form a better judgment. We speak of our righteousness—of our resignation—of our humility—of our charities; but we imagine vainly, that by prac-

tising a few virtues, we have exhausted the whole series of good deeds! Fatal self-delusion! Even granted that we have ourselves done every thing relating to our persons: have we, I ask, done all in relation to others? Have we made virtue estimable? have we espoused the cause of righteousness when we heard it assailed? have we placed ourselves forward to check corruption? have we listened with becoming humility to the advice and remonstrance of others? have not our slothfulness and our timidity prevented us from resisting the wrong? And even if we can answer all these queries in a manner to satisfy our consciences, we have yet the startling question to meet: "How have we educated our children?" We boast about the beauty of our religion; we deplore its downfall in the misconduct of many around us; we withdraw even from popular meetings, because we cannot stem the tide of wrong measures enforced against the precepts of the law; but our children we neglect, they are to obtain a knowledge of religion by intuition or inspiration; we do not trouble ourselves to teach them the way they should walk in, we do not show them the path of righteousness; all we do is to tell them that they are born of Jewish parentage, and leave them then to find their way to the knowledge and practice of the precepts revealed to Moses, as well as they can; we have discharged our duty by being their corporeal parents, and we either have not the abilities or the inclination to become their spiritual ones also. And even if we tell them a few of the commandments, we are too enlightened forsooth to enforce them; we allege to live in a free country, and say, every one has a right to do

what he pleases. Abstractedly speaking, we have a power of doing whatever we will, even the most unnatural crimes; but the right to do wrong is an absurdity, which none but weak minds can ever entertain. This being the case, it is evidently absurd to let our children go unpunished, or at all events unreproved, if they fail to attend to the religious duties which we ourselves teach them, or which an instructor to whose care we have intrusted their education has imparted. But this, alas! is not our mode of proceeding; for no matter how little regardful the child is of religious observance, we close our eyes against it, and foolishly imagine, that riper years will teach him more correctly, than our persuasion can do in childhood. But we deceive ourselves; for religion is a check upon the inclinations and passions, as has been said already very often; if, therefore, the curbing of these passions and these inclinations has not been strictly enforced at an age, when the physical organization of the body is not sufficiently developed to permit the child to act as his sensual feelings demand: how can it be expected that he will be moderate in the enjoyment of unhallowed pleasures, when he feels himself drawn towards them by the example of others and his own inward impulse, when he at the same time imagines, that his powers of mind and body are now fully equal to their being taken in large and immoderate quantities?—Or we attend carefully to the education of our children in childhood; we early teach them to repeat, when they first begin to lisp with their infant stammer, the unity of our God; yes, they are taught to say: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Eternal Being." As they advance farther

in years, we instil in them a part of the duties they owe to this only God, ay, make them acquainted by degrees with the whole duty of man. But no sooner have they reached the age of boyhood, than all restraint is at once withdrawn, and they are taught to unlearn all the lessons of their childhood; for it is not to be supposed that the young gentleman need to be an attendant at the place of worship; it can hardly be expected of him, that he should abstain from forbidden food; and as for Sabbaths and the festivals—he is placed in a situation where their observance is next to impossible; he is told, that it is the chief business of his life to amass money either as a merchant, a mechanic, a physician, or a lawyer, and that he will have done enough to satisfy his parents' scruples, if he comes once a year or once in two years, on a Kippur or Rosh-Hashanah, to appear before the altar of God, provided he does all in his power during the rest of the time to advance the interest of his parents or his own, and their mutual high-standing in society. And even if we teach our children actually and truly how to fear God, we very often destroy all good effects by our own irreligious conduct. We teach them: "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy," and we follow our pursuits on this day; what then can they learn? is not our good instruction more than counterbalanced by our own transgression? Again we complain, that our children will not attend at the Synagogue, despite of our commands to that effect; but we corrupt them by example, in staying at home for every trifling excuse we can make to lull our inward accuser.—We tell them to abstain from forbidden food; while we ourselves cease to be strict

Jews, as soon as we leave a congregation.—We tell our children not to tell lies, and not to calumniate or speak evil of others; but they see daily, how we prevaricate, slander the innocent, and misconstrue the words and deeds of others.—We tell our children to believe in the word of God, to adhere to the faith of their ancestors; and they nevertheless hear every now and then how we dispute in their presence about the fundamental parts of the law even, not to mention the minor observances.—We tell our children, how glorious a boon the Almighty has given us in bestowing his holy Torah on our ancestors; but it is useless to hide from them, that we are ashamed of being at times known as Jews, as though it would be a disgrace to be descended from that glorious people, who were enlightened in a pure knowledge of the Creator, and in possession of his wise and saving laws, while the Egyptians worshipped beasts, the Chaldeans the host of heaven, the Phœnicians the Moloch, and the Persians the fire; while the Grecians were roving sea-robbers; the Romans not in existence; the Gauls and Germans savages roaming through their trackless, swampy forests; and while the Britons, the predecessors of the proud English nation, stalked about naked with their bodies painted blue, like modern savages of some southern isle. And our children, I assert, must discover constantly by our manner, that we are wellnigh ashamed of being known as the posterity of the noble Israelitish people, who were enlightened and religious, while the rest of the world was either sunk in barbarism or gross idolatry. And how again can our younger ones attain sufficient self-respect to avow publicly their adherence to the Mo-

saic creed, when their guardians and parents are at so much pains constantly to surround themselves with those not belonging to the covenant, while the Jew is excluded, even from the Jew's house, as though he were not fit to associate with the distinguished men and women of other sects? Is it now to be wondered at, that our children are daily growing more indifferent to our sacred religion? that they ultimately throw off its yoke altogether? and that we are compelled to call the Romanist, the Protestant, and the infidel, by the endearing names of uncle, aunt, brother, sister, and cousin? How can we be astonished, that the followers of our faith are daily becoming fewer amongst our younger members, when their education is so wretchedly defective, as has been just exhibited to you? And truly, brethren, if our religion were any thing but divine, it must long since have died out in many countries, and in this country in particular. But there is a germ of life in the institutions handed down from Sinai, which no misconduct of men can extinguish; ay, let every roll of the law (but which God forfend) be ordered to the flames by some new persecutor yet unborn, and let the teachers of our religion be all led out to execution: there would still arise teachers and books of the law from amid the slain adherents, and from amid the ashes of the rolls, and anew would the word be dispensed to the thirsting world; for it is written, that the law shall never depart from our mouth, nor from the mouth of our remotest descendants.—But I digress; the contemplation of the glorious permanence of the treasure preserved in yonder ark before us would lead me from my subject, should I suffer my feelings to lead me on.

To revert to our subject: if we wish to do any thing to advance the cause of our religion, we must begin to attend more carefully, than we have been in the habit of doing, to the education of our children, so that each parent may have well-founded hopes, to see arising in his offspring a new generation of adherents to the law of God, and have the satisfaction to know, that, when he is departing to a better world, his descendants have been so educated, that he may look forward to meeting with them again before the throne of God in bliss and happiness.—Indeed, no other repentance can be of any real good; for while each man reforms only himself, he has done but very little of what his God can with justice demand of him. Suppose a spirit should appear before the judgment of the Most High, and be questioned what he had done with the charges intrusted to his care, and be compelled to answer, that one had forsaken the Synagogue for the church of Rome; another had joined the Moslems, and a third had become an atheist, because he the father had neglected to teach them carefully the way they should go: can it be supposed that happiness would be awarded to him? No, the voice of thunder would reverberate in his ears with the dreadful doom: "Be thou consigned to punishment, till thy children have expiated their guilt, for thou, their parent, and their sentinel, hast neglected to obey the precept which says, 'And thou shalt teach them carefully unto thy children, and thou shalt speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;' and because being by God appointed their sentinel and guardian thou hast neglected thy trust, and

been careless about warning them of the danger they were running by entering the way of sin."—Would this not be a doom deserved by a parent so acting? and how many expose themselves daily to it by their entire or partial forgetfulness of the sacred trust reposed in them? For, brethren, you must know, that the children with which we may be blest are not to be looked upon as our sole property, and whose religious education we are permitted to neglect or promote as may suit our fancy; on the contrary, they are like something left by one person in the safe-keeping of another, who receives pay for the trouble he may be at for watching over the property intrusted to him, but which may be demanded back at any moment, unhurt and entire. The parents must, therefore, take all the pains they are capable of, to instruct their children in infancy in their duties, and to show them in their own persons such an example of righteousness, that they may never be induced either to despise their parents for their impiety, or to neglect the instruction they have received; and when the age of infancy is passed, care should be taken that the lessons of childhood be not effaced by the license or temptation held out, or by downright compulsion to forsake the path of religion. If, after all, our offspring should not be according to our expectations, we have done our duty, we have warned them, and their blood will be on their own heads.

Brethren, long since have I wished to address you upon this very important subject: and I must ask your indulgence for having detained you so much longer than it is my custom to do. But I need not tell you, that what has been said this day is not half

sufficient to discuss the subject in any way commensurate with its importance; my object was merely to draw your attention seriously to this matter, little doubting, but that your own reflections will fill up whatever is defective in this slight sketch.—To you, therefore, fathers in Israel! do I address myself; devote some more time to the personal superintendence over the education of your children, and do not leave their future happiness entirely to pensioned strangers, who but too often think themselves absolved from all responsibility, when their scholars are perfect in their lessons; as they say, and perhaps with justice, that they are not chosen to teach religion and morality, but only the usual routine of sciences and accomplishments, some of which are, at best, of doubtful usefulness!—And you, who are mothers in the house of Jacob, listen I pray you, to the advice of a brother, though he be young and not as experienced or as virtuous as many of you. In your power it is to produce a great reformation in the state of our youths. It is said by our wise men: "That for the merit of pious women our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt;" and I am confident, that even to this day true devotion and true piety dwell in many a bosom of the virgins and matrons of our people. Try, then, your gentle power of persuasion, which you can so powerfully exert; lead your children and your wards in the way they should go: point out to them the deceits of transgression; tell them how many a noble mind has been wrecked upon the devious way of sin, and how many an humble orphan has been raised to eminence, solely by the pursuit of virtue, based upon the revelation from Sinai.—If even some hours usually

devoted to pleasure and recreation should have to be abstracted for this arduous undertaking, you will be sufficiently rewarded, when you see your sons grow up round your table like the sprouts of the olive in the fertile field, with vigorous minds dwelling in uncorrupted bodies.—If thus we are all united, if the teacher, the father, and the mother all co-operate, we may ultimately hope to see a race of firm believers spring up in this country, nay, in this very town; and the Synagogue, which is now so often nearly empty, will then be filled with adorers anxious to hasten to the house of God. We shall then not have to feel ashamed at being told, that professing Jews partook of the flesh of the prohibited swine in public; we shall then not be mortified by finding one Jew despising the other, and joining himself in wedlock to the stranger; we shall then not be shocked by the public profanation of the Sabbath and festivals, whereas we now witness, perhaps this very day, people attending to their usual occupations in open violation of our law.

As I said, in the beginning of this discourse, this is the season of repentance, and the beginning of a new year after the creation. Shall we not resolve to begin this new period in a new and better manner? shall it be said, that year after year none of us has amended a faulty life? No; let it be our endeavour to prove that we have removed the obduracy of our hearts, that the heavenly legacy is still dear to our souls, and that having been warned, we have been roused to reflection, to adoration, and repentance.—We have heard the voice of the cornet, the call of the Lord has been sounded in our dwellings; let it animate us to reconsider our doings and to reform the

evil of our ways; and may we thus deserve to have the decree recorded for our benefit and happiness in the book of remembrance before our everlasting Judge, when the Day of Atonement closes: "My children, your sins are forgiven!"

O adorable and unending One! shower over us thy grace and protection; let thy wisdom fill our souls; so that, taught of Thee, we may be led to a perfect understanding of our duties, and know fully the end of our appointment on earth. Lead us far from the way of temptation and of contempt, and preserve us entire in our dispersion; and let thy mercy prevail, when Thou sealest on the approaching Day of Forgiveness of sin the fate of the children of men; and say in mercy to the recording angel: "I have found atonement!" May this be thy will, now, and for ever! Amen.

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DISCOURSE XXX.

THE SELECTION OF ISRAEL.

FATHER OF MERCY! who art so highly elevated above every thing existing, that even the utmost extent of the universe cannot contain Thee, deign to display thy glory over us, and to dwell in the hearts of those of thy children who are of devout heart and contrite spirit. So that all mankind may be con-

vinced, that to Thee alone, everlasting One! appertain the glory, the majesty, and the dominion over all, and be led to worship Thee only, in truth and sincerity. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Many of you may have heard ridicule cast upon what some term the arrogance of the Hebrews in styling themselves the chosen people. For our opponents say, that all earth belongs to God, and it is unworthy of his greatness to select the fewest of people as his peculiar treasure. Besides they aver, that we do not show such a superiority above other classes of men as would justly entitle us to a distinction so proud, even granting that God had chosen us.—Others again say, that in truth we have once been actually the chosen people, but that now we are rejected for our rebellious conduct.—We will briefly examine all these objections, and see whether it is beneath the dignity of God to have *one* people, to whom He, the All-wise, attaches more importance than to any other; whether we possess any superiority; and, lastly, if it be consonant with Revelation, that we should have been rejected after having been once chosen.

We know from the whole tenor of the history of mankind, that the children of man in the early ages, as well as in later times, did transgress those bounds of righteousness which the Almighty had marked out for their guidance. Misled by pride, blinded by passion, and heedless of consequences, they followed the counsels of their wicked hearts, and said to God: "Depart Thou from us," till their crimes had reached a height no longer tolerable to the just and wise Crea-

tor; when He opened the windows of heaven, split the fountains of the mighty deep, and the rushing, surging waters of the flood swept off the sinful race from the face of the earth. But in punishing the sinners, the Merciful was not unconscious of the work of his hands, and He saved from amidst the destruction the man who had been righteous and upright in his generation; and Noah was thus spared to repeople the earth, and he became in consequence the second father to the intelligent inhabitants of the globe.

To him also were given statutes and commandments, by which a man might walk in the way of righteousness; but his descendants also forgot very soon, like the nations before the flood had done, their duties towards God, and they instituted worships which they had invented through their fancy, and they obeyed laws which were counter to the revelation given to Noah.—You will thus see, that twice the world had an example of a universal and uniform revelation, and twice also an example of the forgetfulness by the world of a revelation given to all. The parallel holds good even farther. For, as before the flood there was one man righteous more than his generation: there also was found in the second general corruption of manners *one* pre-eminent for his signal piety; this man, as you all know, and as we have noticed on prior occasions, was Abraham. We need not recapitulate his history, any farther than to mention that God made with him a covenant, as the Bible calls it, to constitute his descendants a people peculiarly chosen to the service of God, and that they should observe the precepts which the Lord had given or should ordain.—You will observe, brethren, that

what has just been said will answer the first objection started above. The Almighty had found, that as human nature was constituted, and observing the situation of mankind at that period, it would not answer any good purpose to give a general revelation for a third time; for we have every reason to think that a law so given would have been disregarded again and again, and every succeeding generation would have departed farther from the truth, if it had been the common legacy of all, and consequently not valued because of its universality. It was therefore that God called Abraham to his service, after he had displayed his devotion amidst idolaters, that is to say, that the laws given to Noah had found in him a faithful adherent, despite the general aberration with which he was on all sides surrounded. Abraham was therefore told, that he should be blessed, and that at length all nations should be blessed through him. What now was the consequence of the promise to Abraham? what in fact could it be? It was, that to his descendants there should be given a law, a code, of universal applicability and of everlasting duration; this was a blessing to Abraham himself, and one which alone could bless ultimately all nations of the earth; for in the spread of the tenets of truth every human being can lay a claim to a portion of the blessing flowing from such an event; but let conquest be extended ever so far, the conquered must suffer, for there can be no conquest without inflicting cruel misery on the subdued; and riches distributed in unbounded plenty will not satisfy the cravings of cupidity and the discontents of envy, even if every human being were to be placed above want. But

truth spread, as we have said, universally abroad, distributed to all human beings alike, is indeed that species of treasure through which none are made to suffer, and which leaves no room to excite the discontent of the envious.

But, brethren, whilst feeling within ourselves, how great the blessing is we possess in the revealed law of our God, we must not overlook the astonishing evidence of the most unsearchable wisdom which is displayed in the whole arrangement of its promulgation. Observe,—if God had descended in the utmost state of majesty, and revealed himself to Abraham, to Isaac, or to Jacob, assume the magnificence to have been even exceeding the descent on Sinai: still it would have been a revelation to individuals, and succeeding generations would have doubted the evidence of *one* man, who, though ever so good, might have been misled, or might be presumed to relate a falsehood in order to magnify his own importance. Therefore a limited number of statutes only was given to the patriarchs, which they were ordered to observe, and to teach their descendants after them. This state of dawning light lasted for about four centuries; ray after ray of light had been gradually dispensed,—Adam—Hanoch—Noah—Abraham—Isaac—Jacob—Joseph—and perhaps others, of whom no account has come down to our days, because it has no material bearing on the subject of revealed religion, had the Word of God made known to them; thousands upon thousands of the children of the covenant had been added to the original stock of one father and one mother; labour and distress appeared to weigh down their spirits as well as bodies; all hope

had wellnigh been extinguished in the bosoms of Pharaoh's bondmen: when suddenly a light, not a *ray* merely, but a bright luminary, burst forth;—it was a Moses, aided by a benevolent Aaron, both true shepherds, chosen from among the million, that appeared to fulfil the aim of God's intention. And it therefore came to pass in those days, that the glory of our Father was manifestly displayed, and guided by his care Israel went out with rejoicing and gladness to meet their Supreme Ruler at the foot of the holy Sinai.—Here the consummation of the calling of Abraham was brought about by the legation of Moses, and the revelation of God was made visible and audible to all the people. And thus not to one great man, but to at least three millions of intelligent beings was confided a light, a treasure, a fruitful source of blessing, which will in the course of time enlighten, enrich, bless, and nourish all nations of the earth.—If then a caviller should ask us, "Why do you believe in the divine legation of Moses?" we may boldly answer: Because there were present the individuals of an entire people, who all were witnesses of the truth of the revelation from Horeb, since all ultimately acquiesced in the rule thus divinely made known, and because these very persons rose up in an incredibly short time into a nation wiser than their former task-masters, different from them in language, manners, and associations of ideas, and proved themselves in possession of a rule of life, and of notions concerning the Deity, far above in purity and truth to aught that had ever been attained by the Egyptians themselves, their predecessors, or their followers, nay, even to this very day.—Shall we say,

that a nation of abject, timid, leprous slaves (for this is the character given of the Israelites) could rise in forty years to a height so unparalleled by the instruction of one man, who had passed the age of eighty, and who must be supposed to have partaken already largely of the usual infirmities of age at this period? You, my brethren, would no doubt think, that the opinion I have just now stated is too ridiculous to be entertained by an intelligent mind; yet it has been entertained by the unbelievers, and forms their chief point in explaining upon merely natural grounds the rise of our people during their wanderings in the wilderness. Yet even grant the objection a thousand times more importance than it deserves, say even it is true: we then should have a miracle still greater than we claim to have been performed. —For our slavery in Egypt is undoubted and undenied even by the heathen. Secondly, our wanderings in the wilderness are also considered authentic. Thirdly, our having a *written* law different from the written law of any other nation is undeniable. Fourthly, it must be inferred, that if the Egyptian priests had had a private or secret law taught in their mysteries not before then promulged to the people, they would certainly have been able, and no doubt would have attempted, to counteract Moses, by making known the same powerful instrument which he had just imparted to the Israelites. Fifthly, it does not bear contradiction that the Israelites after hovering for forty years about the confines of civilized countries, which they were not permitted to enter, conquered Palestine and drove out the inhabitants. Now the simple question is, how were the Egyptians

induced to forego the labour of six hundred thousand slaves? Did their humanity prompt them to this act of benevolence?—Farther,—why did those slaves enter a frightful wilderness? why did they not at once attack a fertile settlement?—Again, whence did they obtain their peculiar statutes?—And granted they were derived from Egyptian sources, what is the reason that the worship of the Egyptians was in most respects so different? And lastly, how did so immense a number of men find subsistence in a wilderness where there is not even water to drink? If, therefore, we even grant to Moses a mind unlike that which any other man has ever possessed, and a vigour of body but little less than angelic: it must still be self-evident that the workings which took place under his administration are too extraordinary to have been the result of ordinary human labour. We have therefore the strongest evidence of the concurrent testimony of our entire people and of a mass of unbroken chains of events to establish the reasonableness of a belief in the selection of Israel as a people chosen by God to hold, as a depositary, a law which was in the first instance to guide them, and at length all other families of the earth.—And in the manner of the selection of Israel, I allude to the manner of their preparatory education by a long series of calamities, we must also discover the marks of profound wisdom. If the law had been given to an opulent people, living in a fruitful country, it might have happened that, being too much devoted to affairs of life, the study of the law would have become a secondary consideration with them, especially if they would have had to subject themselves to many incon-

veniences under the new law. But what did God do to implant the law in the hearts of the Israelites?—He caused Jacob to go down to Egypt, impelled through his love for Joseph; there his descendants multiplied and became a numerous nation, as had been predicted. And when the jealousy of the rulers of the land became excited, the All-wise One did not interfere to prevent the contemplated oppression, foreseeing that it, though protracted from age to age, would in the best manner subserve to his wise views. But when the Egyptians, emboldened by the impunity they had so long enjoyed, began to threaten the extermination of their servants, as soon as they declared their will of going counter to the permission hitherto tacitly extended: the arm of our God was interposed, and the oppressed were freed from bondage, and led, as you all know, through the desert, after having passed the Red Sea, to the foot of Sinai. Miracle after miracle, some natural, some preternatural, had been wrought, to prove to them how powerful, how kind, how wise, how infinite was the God whom their ancestors had worshipped, and to illustrate, in the most striking manner, that the promises made to the good will always be kept, and the reward of their virtuous deeds will surely come, though delayed for a period, for reasons unknown to short-sighted man. Thus delivered and thus protected, our ancestors were notified that their Deliverer would manifest unto them his glory, and make known to them his laws. They declared their willingness, with hearts glowing with gratitude, and minds filled with adoration. The law was then given to the people thus chosen; and though they occasionally re-

belled, yet their situation was so that the law of God constantly became renewed as often as his power was displayed; and this state of their national infancy was consumed by wandering for forty years in the desert, where at length the heavenly code was so firmly cemented among them, that even now it is inextinguishable in the heart of every Israelite.—Understand me well, I do not wish to advance the absurd proposition, that it would have been out of the power of God to effect an instantaneous change of heart among the Hebrews, or to communicate his will at the same moment to all men; but merely as proving that God pursued a course, eminently calculated, more so indeed than any other which our imagination can conceive, to make his law acceptable to the Israelites and permanent among their descendants, short of changing human nature, which last procedure would evidently have been in opposition to the divine economy; and that having once given to his code of pure laws and morality a lasting and imperishable abode on earth, He at the same time had already provided for it a way to the hearts of all mankind, who, as we have every reason to believe, will all ultimately forsake each his idols of silver, and each his idols of gold, to serve Him, the Lord, in sincerity and righteousness. And says Isaiah, in the spirit of inspiration: "And I will show a sign on them, and I will send from them refugees to the nations Tharshish, Pul and Lud, those that draw the bow, Thubal and Yavan, the far islands, that have not heard my fame, and have not seen my glory, and they shall tell of my glory among the nations." (lxvi.19.)—What then can be found derogatory to the greatness of God in

his choosing our nation? Had not our ancestors remained ever true to his statutes? Had we not suffered in Egypt the necessary schooling to fit us for this great object? And what is more, have we not thus far answered the purpose of our selection? Ask of the civilized world, who were the heralds of civilization?—Ask of the philanthropist, who first taught mercy to mankind?—Ask the philosopher, who first proclaimed the unity of God?—Ask the preacher, whence he derives his system of beneficent morality and religion which he upholds?—and all must answer, if they speak the truth, it is from the Israelites that all these blessings have flowed unto mankind; no other nation has had a hand in laying the foundation of these great benefits; and they again have derived all from the Supreme Teacher, for not the most profound wisdom and experience of men could ever devise any thing half so good and beautiful.—And therefore says the Bible:

ואתכם לקח ה׳ ויוצא אתכם מכור הברזל ממצרים
להיות לו לעם נחלה כיום הזה: דברים ד׳ כ׳:

"But you the Lord hath taken and brought you out from the iron furnace from Egypt, to be to Him a nation of inheritance, as it is this day." Deuteronomy iv. 20.

The perfect reasonableness of all we have just advanced, supported as it is by revelation, experience, and common sense, will be sufficient to answer the first objection, although much more can be said, the subject being far from exhausted, by the few illustrations which I have laid before you. But the space which an address ought to occupy prevents me from

going into the matter more in detail at present, although it is highly probable, that I may recur to it at another time.—We will, therefore, now proceed to the second objection: "What have the Israelites gained by their selection?" We are asked, where are our palaces?—where our splendid temples?—where our kings?—where our national government?—and what gain has a Jew by maintaining his identity, living as he does among the multitude who differ from him in laws, in habits, and in feelings?—To these questions, we answer, If national grandeur is to be the sole criterion of the importance of a people we have no importance to boast of; and what is more, it is extremely doubtful if ever we had many splendid buildings in the height of our glory, as but one temple was permitted; and in vain does any one inquire in Palestine for the existence of stupendous works of art which properly belong to us alone. Our kings have in truth long ceased to reign, and our national government has been dissolved, and our people scattered to all climes of heaven. Of power on earth, of importance among nations we have no share, not even the smallest if properly viewed, any farther than the wealth of a few individuals has ever been able to afford us.—But if we come to the benefits of the mind —to the elevation of the soul—to purity of worship —to hopes of a glorious futurity—there, indeed, we are blessed above all tongues and nations! What care we for palaces as marks of glory? while we have the precious law as our portion; what can nations boast of their splendid temples? when our house of God, the house of prayer for all nations, will one day be rebuilt in splendour, far outshining

all earthly glory; what care we for kings—for governments? when we daily see the power passing away from the mighty, and the sceptre hourly wrenched out of the hands of princes. But we have in our scattered state even a bond of union which binds our hearts to our God, and holds us in an unseen embrace as one people; which makes us observed and watched by all mankind; which opens for us the way to the favour of God; which unlocks for us the gates of salvation; which admits us daily and hourly into the portals of wisdom and the fear of the Lord—which, in short, confers all that can make an existence happy and useful; and this is the advantage, brethren, which is conferred by the law—the law given from Sinai; the law which has withstood the tempests of oppression and the ravages of time—and yet stands with vigour unseared, with its lustre undiminished! And this law it is which makes us a great nation, a people assisted of the Lord, who is the shield of our salvation. Ay! truly now we look unsightly, our countenance is marred, our bodies are bruised by the blows of those that hate us, and we are regarded as struck by God and afflicted. But we need not fear, our countenance will be healed, our wounds will be bound up; and though the blows fall again and again upon our devoted heads, though ever so often despised, and called a people stricken for transgressions which we have not committed, and persecuted for sins not our own: yet the day will come when it will be acknowledged that our sufferings have been cause of happiness to the nations, who then will see the effects arising from a disobedience to the Divine Will, and they will all accept the

law which, infringed, made us unhappy, and which obeyed once did, and will again, make us the light and the glory of the world. In the meantime let storms assail us—let us be derided for our littleness—let kings and nations attempt to stamp upon and extinguish the small remnant: the end of us will be far happier than theirs, and we will be great when the names of our adversaries will only be remembered as curses and as warnings. Like the mighty river whose source is so small that the foolish may deem he can obstruct the fountain by placing his foot upon the insignificant orifice, or over whose slender rill, at its outset, the thoughtless schoolboy jumps to show that he can bestride the mighty water; but which, at length, mingles its rushing waves with the flood of the ocean, and bears on its bosom the largest fleet, heedless of the attempted obstruction or of the childish ridicule: thus do we pursue, though alas! as unconsciously often as the lifeless river, our course towards better times, but which we retard by neglecting the duties which would cause us to live and prosper, if we would be mindful of them.—Yet even in this way do we instruct the world, and like the stream which makes fruitful its banks and blesses thus the country through which it flows, we bestow the waters of life everlasting upon the nations of the earth, in whose lands we now live. If we are then asked, what advantages we have for opposing ourselves to the opinions of the majority? we answer, We only fulfil our destiny, the object of the call of our father Abraham, to whom God said, "All nations of the earth shall be blessed through thee." This certainty is too sweet to be exchanged for worldly goods or for

offices on earth! Let the nations then be ever so great; let them lord it over our people, and be it ever our lot to be the humble, the poor, the despised Jews: yet are we ever the greatest, and most wonderful and beneficent community, as from us and from our holy Bible light, and civilization, and morality, and love of God, have spread for ages, and will continue so to extend these blessings, till it be accomplished what was the original intention of God.

Thus it has come to pass, that we have stood the storms which have at all times assailed us; for it was our God who always watched over us, and no empire ever so mighty and wise can prevail against Him. This was strikingly exemplified when the Syrian king, Antiochus, swept like a whirlwind over Judæa; the righteous mourned, for the brave were slain; and the priests wept in private, for the altar was desolate. A heathen worship was proclaimed, and it was death to call upon the Lord of heaven. If ever our religion was seemingly nigh its downfall, it was surely at that dark period, when the foreign enemy and the infidels at home conspired to destroy the sanctuary and to uproot the seeds of righteousness.—But He who sits enthroned in heaven smiled, the Lord looked upon the noise of the heathens with contempt, and He smote them, as it were, with an iron staff, and shivered them like potter's ware. And He raised unto the remnant of Jacob's house a helper from among them, and Judah Maccabeus avenged the house of God defiled, the altar broken, and the worshippers slaughtered; and in grateful remembrance of the mighty deliverance from annihilation, the eight days of *Hanuckah* were instituted as a memorial for everlasting.

Since that period, our enemies have not pretermitted their exertions; they took constantly counsel against the Lord and his chosen people; but all their efforts have resulted in utter discomfiture; and though they have succeeded in gaining the interested and timid, the great multitude of us have either met their death in defence of our law, or have lived while steadfastly maintaining it. And a Titus and a Hadrian, though one burnt the temple, and the other passed the plough over Jerusalem, a host of persecutors armed with physical and spiritual terrors, the horrid Inquisition, and lastly, the subtle associations which, with the power of worldly wealth, or the allurements of offices and distinctions, attempted to call off our brethren from their allegiance to God—have all shared an equal disappointment, and they have all had to acknowledge that it is useless to attempt a war with Heaven. And thus said David:

ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ אשר הלכו אלהים לפדות לו לעם ולשום לו שם : שמואל ב' ז' כג' :

"And where is a single people on earth like thy people Israel, for whose sake a deity has gone to redeem them to him as a people, and to make himself a name?" 2 Samuel vii. 23.

It will thus be seen, that our selection was made for the purpose of rendering the name of God glorious among the nations, and to bring all mankind ultimately to the knowledge of the righteous way; as the prophet says: "And the nations shall go by thy light and kings by the brightness of thy shining;" and the period when this will be accomplished will be a time of universal peace, and of the reign of a

knowledge of the Lord. Is this object of sufficient importance to have warranted the Supreme Wisdom to select unto himself a people peculiarly beloved above all others? and is a destiny thus glorious not sufficiently great to make every Israelite feel gratified at the knowledge of belonging to the descendants of Abraham? Surely, brethren, if we are not totally immersed in the whirlpool of selfishness and pursuits of vain aggrandizement: we must be satisfied, even when we are without worldly splendour, with the consciousness that our beautiful system will survive all existing institutions, and that the remotest posterity of our tyrants and oppressors shall at length be brought to bow before the same altar with the children of Israel. It behoves, therefore, that every Hebrew do his share towards sanctifying God's name, and endeavour to fulfil the prediction of the prophet, "And I will show myself great, and be sanctified, and be known before the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord!" And do you, my brethren, who listen now to me, impress it deeply on your minds, and tell it to your friends and to your children, that not yet has it become of no moment to belong to the chosen people; but that neither is it enough to be only a Jew by name. No! we should rise from our supineness, avow boldly our sentiments, not fear to be ridiculed because we thank God in our prayers, that He has chosen us from all nations, and act just so as this proud eminence demands of us. Let us support the cause of religion, teach its precepts, and never omit any opportunity to display our confidence in our heavenly Father, and our subjection to his will.

Most merciful One, who hast ever been so kind and bounteous to thy people, continue always to foster and protect them, and let them find grace and mercy in thy presence, whenever their prayer ascends to thy abode in Heaven. Amen.

Kislev 30th. } 5594.
Decebr. 12th. }

NOTE.—The continuation of this address will be found under Discourse XXXII.—Soon after the above was written, I was seized with a fearful malady, which prevented me from continuing my labours till after a long and painful interruption. I do not wish to drag myself personally before the public; but I cannot refrain from mentioning, that being supposed on the point of death, my only brother hastened from a distance to my bedside. It pleased our heavenly Father to afflict him with the same disease. Although robust, and to all appearance of that physical construction, as to render his long surviving me almost a matter of certainty, he yet sunk under his sufferings, and tranquil and resigned he breathed out his pure spirit in the hands of Him who gave it, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, on the 14th of March, '94, beloved by many, and hated by none. The recollection of his death is doubly agonizing, because he had to receive from friendly strangers the kindness and attention that ought to have been rendered by his brother, who was kept from his couch of sickness by sufferings of unspeakable intensity and horror. I ask the indulgence of the reader for this digression; but I could not let this opportunity pass, without passing a slight tribute to one so worthy and innocent as was my deceased, my only brother, Jacob Leeser.

DISCOURSE XXXI.

THE DUTY OF ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE.

O MOST merciful One! who sendest succour to the afflicted, and protectest the helpless, grant us thy protection and deliver us from evil, and judge us not according to our unworthy deeds, but according to thy goodness, which is everlasting. Amen.

BRETHREN!

We are taught in the books of Holy Writ not to look upon this life as the chief period of our existence; nor upon the goods of the earth, the material possessions, as the greatest acquirement; nor, lastly, upon sensual pleasures as the highest enjoyment.—And seeing that every thing here below is transitory, even the most careless observer is very apt to acquiesce in the idea, that life is short and its pleasures uncertain; yet there are few, indeed, who are led on to a virtuous and godly life through a contemplation of the vicissitudes to which they are subject. Indeed, if one looks at the haste with which we all run after gain; the efforts we make to lay up treasures, and the perseverance with which we pursue to our dying day the phantom pleasure: he might be led to suppose, that we believed ourselves thus engaged in fulfilling the true object of our existence. And to confess the truth, many, if not all of us, think they have

done every thing that can be demanded of them, if their wealth has increased a hundred-fold; if their houses are splendid; if their appointments are grand, and if the voice of mirth is never ceasing in their habitation! They say: "Life is short, let us, therefore, enjoy its sweets;" and this heartless philosophy is often the cause of many a life being fooled away in vain pursuits and in endeavours which leave the soul wofully deficient in those riches which are to gain her an entrance into everlasting happiness. And yet what are riches? Who has ever found his thirst for gold entirely gratified by immense possessions? And say, what is power? Who was ever so powerful, but he sighed for more worlds to conquer? And speak, what is pleasure? When pain lurks among enjoyment, and death rears his visage where all are gay? It is in this spirit that David said (Psalm xxxix. 13): "Hear my prayer, O Lord! list to my cry; be not silent to my tears; for a stranger I am with Thee, a sojourner like all my forefathers." Here the inspired Psalmist expresses his ideas of his existence on earth. "For a stranger I am with Thee;" we are like strangers, that enter an unknown land, driven there by circumstances beyond their control, and who may be compelled to leave again as suddenly as they arrived, or at best after a short warning. And let us understand the words "with Thee;" we are, whilst thus staying on God's earth under the supervision of Him who sent us, we are in his presence; for although unseen, He is felt every where; for though unperceived by the human senses, the whole world is full of his glory.—And, continues David: "A sojourner like all my forefathers." As our forefathers

were here permitted to act their part and then were hidden from view, removed from amidst the living: so are we tolerated strangers, suffered to take our abode for a time, a very brief space of time like those who went before us, till our day of removal also arrives, when we are hurried away, no matter how many engagements of business are incompleted, how many houses left unfinished; no matter if the festive meal be not half devoured, whilst yet, perhaps, the mandate of the potent ruler has scarcely been uttered to do some mighty work; whilst yet the orator's words are on his lips, and whilst the foot of beauty enchants the eye, even of envy, by its evolutions in the mazes of the dance. Why then should the spirit of mortal be proud? Or rather, why should he not endeavour to live according to the will of Him, with whom he is a stranger? in whose world he is a sojourner? through whose goodness he lives?—This consideration brings before us the whole subject of active religious duties, which consist not merely in abstaining from doing harm, nor even in bestowing the superfluous and executing that which is easy of accomplishment, but in a constant labouring in the path of goodness, in sacrificing interest, and in doing things unpleasant and even contrary to our inclinations, if they should chance to present themselves as a part of the work to be performed.—But some one may ask: "Can religion then consist for the greatest part of self-denials and sacrifices of our interest?" Certainly; and this is the reason why a religion was revealed, to enable us to know when we ought to act counter to our inclination, and when to sacrifice our possessions in the service of God. Of our own accord we could not know,

that we are bound to give charity, to assist the sick, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to bury the dead. For although it is very consonant with the finer feelings of our nature, to be engaged in these holy offices of kindness: still we find that there are some who not only abstain from fulfilling these duties, but who do just the opposite; they refuse charity to the poor, and even rob the orphan and the widow, so as to render them dependent upon a merciless world; some are so callous as to plunder the wounded soldier on the field of deadly combat, and answer his cry for water to quench his thirst, made intolerable by burning fever, by a thrust with the dagger; the miser will turn the shivering son of misery unheeded from his door; and many will refuse the last rights of humanity to the departed, because he is indebted to them for a little silver. All this proves, that human nature required a guide to show it what is right and pleasing in the eyes of God. And even if we reject the above examples, by saying, that of extreme cases of depravity it is unfair to draw general rules as to the necessity of a revelation: still we may freely say, that the religious duties, properly so called, as the observance of the Sabbath, the restitution of purchased lands in the fiftieth year, the release of all bondmen, and many other ordinances, although in themselves strictly political (not to mention the purely ceremonial) laws, are not the natural offspring of unassisted reason. But we wander from our subject: all I meant to demonstrate is, that religion in every instance is a guide to the feelings by which they are to be regulated; and to attain perfection (in as far as this quality is compatible with our nature) we should

fill our minds with those ideas which are best calculated to induce an acquiescence in the divine will. Now, where the duties demanded of us are mere *pleasant* exercises of humanity, it will require but little effort to be religious; for instance, the welcoming of strangers; the joyous reception of a bride; the restoring of peace between offended brothers: still these acts are in obedience to the dictates of the law, and we must, therefore, believe that reward will follow our execution of them. But there are other deeds of humanity to which many may, perhaps, be indisposed from mere affection; and, consequently, to act in obedience to the will of Heaven in this respect, requires more or less an effort to subdue unhallowed feelings, and to yield ourselves to superior guidance. Among duties of this kind, we may enumerate the redemption of prisoners, the buying in of a relative's field; the remission of debts in the sabbathic year; restitution of property unlawfully obtained; the restoring of pledges to the debtor before sundown, and many other duties enumerated in the law. Still, though repugnance may be felt to the exercise of these precepts, they are, strictly speaking, moral laws in contradistinction to the religious ordinances; and since they may be unpalatable to many, we find the law of God reminding us of the obligation we are under to fulfil them, and giving us also reasons *why* we should be careful of their observance. It will easily strike you, brethren, what sinful feeling stands in the way, when we are told to redeem from bondage a fellow-being. It is avarice, however refined; we speak not of where an actual inability exists, but where one has the means in his possession and hesi-

tates, because he may allege that he need not spend his money for a friend, who may never be able to repay him, or if able, may be ungrateful enough to suffer him to lose by his humanity; and he, perhaps, will also fancy to himself, that his means are no more than he wants for his own use, and that he cannot spare the least of them for the service of his Maker and the benefit of his fellow-man. Observe, a personal unwillingness to do a duty of humanity never enters into the consideration; this is always kept out of view, to satisfy an uneasy conscience, and to excuse a duty pretermitted; and provided we can colour our selfishness with a sufficient show of argument, we are perfectly easy, as though we had done all that could reasonably be demanded of us. But, though we may thus succeed in imposing upon the credulity of others and even upon ourselves, for by a series of false reasoning every man may lay a flattering unction to his soul: we shall, nevertheless, not be altogether successful, for there is One that searches the heart, and knows the thoughts of man, though they be vain. And thus, even if we blind ourselves by talking of an inability to comply, of ingratitude in those to be served, or the like, we shall never be able to hide the deformity of an indulged avarice from our heavenly Judge. But if we weigh his omniscience against our desire to retain what is once ours, we no doubt will be willing to satisfy his demands, since we are not able to escape his superintendence. Farther, we should consider, that it is by no means certain, that we are not to lose the very amount we withhold, even if we should not be deprived of all that we value so highly. I need not tell you, that of hundreds born

in affluence the majority perhaps die in want—experience teaches that; and if we inquire, how does it happen that industry and means employed by one man do not yield the return which they yielded to another: we shall be answered, the means of the one were blessed by God; from those of the others the blessing was withheld.—Now, how can a man suppose that it will be in his power to keep what he once possesses, even by the greatest exertion of avarice, when the power of the Bestower of wealth stands opposed to him? And assume that he may succeed, that all his plans yield the expected return, as the fruit of his good calculation: what has he at last obtained? The favour of God? No, for he cared not to spend his wealth in his service! But he has acquired masses of shining metal; fine houses in many a noble city; lands rich in fruitfulness; ships which cover the ocean, and many obedient servants and fawning sycophants eager for the refuse of his table. Can his expectations go farther? and if they do, can they be farther gratified? He has worshipped an idol, and it was given him; what more can he ask? but he cannot remain with this idol for ever, and his wealth is left behind him to be dissipated by a careless spendthrift, or to be the bone of contention between disappointed heirs; or even if he leaves it for charitable purposes, it is extremely probable that his mind has become so contracted by pursuits of gain, that he is unjust to the living after his death, and he leaves those unprovided for who have a natural claim on his bounty. But go yet farther and say, that his wealth should be fairly and honourably divided, and that perfect satisfaction should follow the division: still

what merit can he have for his charity, since it was only bestowed when he could no longer clutch it within his iron grasp? Can this be pleasing to God?—But observe, that, hitherto, we have assumed a uniform good luck (as it is termed) attending the efforts of him who refuses to give of his bread to the poor, and of his money to the needy; but we all know that success is not a necessary consequence of this line of conduct, any more than that poverty is the concomitant of liberality.—The question then arises: Since success is not always attending upon saving, but upon the blessing of God, shall we expose ourselves to the punishment of being deprived of what we value so much by a refusal to comply with the conditions upon which we were appointed, so to say, trustees under the gift of God, to administer for the portion of our existence on earth a share of such worldly riches as may come into our hands? And says the prophet (Malachi iii. 10, 11): "Bring ye all the tenth part into the treasury-house, that it may serve as provision in my house; and prove me, I pray you, in this, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you blessing without measure. And I will keep off for you the devouring insect, that it may not destroy for you the fruit of the earth; and not unfruitful shall be unto you the vine in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." We thus see that we are promised worldly success, if we comply with the demands of the law; and, if we give the tenth part of the produce of the earth to the Levite, share our money with the poor, and be as it were angels and ministers of comfort on earth, we are told that the windows of heaven shall be opened to shower blessings down for

us without measure. The earth then shall not be devastated by blight and locust, and richly shall the vineyard repay the vintner's toil. Is the condition not such that even avarice would ask no more? And can we doubt the fulfilment of the promise, when we truly see that the seed of the righteous are blessed, and that his children never want for bread?—But discard altogether worldly success, admit that the bounty bestowed upon the poor, the time spent in personal deeds of humanity are actually lost to worldly gain; that you are so much the poorer by having on sixty Sabbath-days in the year abstained from labour and pursuits of gain: what, I ask you, can you allege as a valid reason against obedience to the law, when you reflect that by so doing you gain the favour of God, the good-will of men, and a tranquil mind? The favour of God! imagine only that you are laying up for yourselves treasures imperishable; beatitude unending; bliss without measure! And by what means? by gratifying the nobler feelings of your nature, feelings, which at last are the chief distinguishing characteristics between man and beast. And what feelings do you mortify? avarice, cruelty, and envy. And what do you sacrifice? money, earthly treasures, things in themselves nothing, and only valuable in as far as they may be the means of doing good.—And whom do you serve? yourselves; for all the benefit of virtuous actions will be yours; God's happiness cannot be increased by any thing you can bestow, nor can you injure Him by any misdeeds of yours.—And who is it that begs of you to try his truth? it is the Giver of all, to whom all are indebted for their daily food; as the Psalmist says (cxlv.

15–16): "The eyes of all look with hope towards Thee, and Thou givest them their food in its time. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfied all that liveth with beneficence." And even were a man ever so wealthy, were his means so ample that his riches could not be consumed in his lifetime, nor in the lifetime of his children: still it is God who sends the rain to refresh the earth, who blesses the seasons, and crowns the summer with fruitfulness.—And who at last requires it of you to neglect feelings of selfishness in obedience to his laws? it is the Author of all, He in whom the world exists; the Sovereign of the universe, the Omnipotent Proprietor of the land, the King, in whose dominions you are strangers and tolerated sojourners. And thus we read in the portion of the law read this day:

וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית הן לא נזרע ולא נאסף את תבואתנו : וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשת את התבואה לשלש השנים : וזרעתם את השנה השמינת ואכלתם מן התבואה ישן עד השנה התשיעת עד בוא תבואתה תאכלו ישן : והארץ לא תמכר לצמיתת כי לי הארץ כי גרים ותושבים אתם עמדי : ויקרא כה' כ'-כג' :

"And if you say, What shall we eat in the seventh year? behold we may not sow nor gather in our harvest. But I will command my blessing to you in the sixth year, and it shall produce the necessary harvest for the three years. And when you sow in the eighth year, you shall eat of the old harvest; till the ninth year, till its harvest is housed, shall you eat of the old. And the land shall not be sold away as property, for mine is the land, for strangers and sojourners you are with me." Leviticus xxv. 20–23.

In this text are answered all the objections which the timid, the avaricious, and the obstinate can raise against the compliance with the law.—To the timid and avaricious, God says: "I will command my blessing to you" for a strict obedience. He who fears to starve, because he neither sows nor reaps, is thus assured that famine and deprivation will not happen, because the land lies idle; and the covetous one is notified that he will best consult his interest by doing as commanded; for thus alone will his labour be blest with immense increase.—And to the obstinate one, God says: "The land shall not be sold away as property, for mine is the land," in reply to an objection he might raise against the provision of the law which says, that at the Jubilee every piece of land shall revert to the original owner. The latter might say: "The land is my own, why shall I be prevented from exchanging it for money, if I please?" to this he is answered that the land is not his, but merely a trust, permitted to remain with him by the real Owner of the soil, the Sovereign Lord of all, and the Legislator of Israel.—To explain at present the happy political effect this provision must have upon a people such as the Israelites were in Palestine, by preventing the growth of a few immense estates to the detriment of the many, would detain us too long; but enough for our purpose is to mention, that it evidently proceeded from a view to render the nation as nearly as possible equal, that all might be equally free; and nothing therefore is more true, than what was said in another place, that the Mosaic legislation was intended and well calculated to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest

number, or rather of all people. A law so wise, so entirely based upon the purest principles of philanthropy ought to be dear to us; and let us therefore endeavour to do all that is yet left to us to do. The sabbathic year is, alas! abolished by our dispersion; the trumpet of the Jubilee no longer proclaims liberty and freedom to the land and to all the inhabitants thereof; the festive pilgrims no longer crowd thy highways, O land of Israel! but still we are left fully able to exercise charity to the poor, to comfort the afflicted, to love our fellow-men like ourselves, and to keep the festivals of the Lord, and to celebrate weekly with devotion and an abstinence from labour the Sabbath of rest, in honour of our God—undismayed by the paltry loss of gain—mindful that it is an institution of the Creator of all, an emblem of everlasting rest in heaven, and a memorial that we were servants in Egypt, and that we were redeemed thence by Him, who has bought us as his servants.

O Father! guide us in the way of holiness, enlighten our souls with thy wisdom, and shield us from evil during our appointment on earth. And when our pilgrimage is ended, when our task is done: O then receive us, Thou Holy One! in thy paternal embrace, there to rest in happiness to eternity. Amen.

Iyar 14th. } 5594.
May 23d. }

DISCOURSE XXXII.

THE SELECTION OF ISRAEL.

SOVEREIGN of the universe! we adore Thee, because of thy great goodness and glory which Thou hast full often displayed over us thy people. From Egypt Thou didst redeem us, and hear our cries amid our afflictions, because Thou wert mindful of the covenant Thou hadst made with our ancestors, who walked before Thee in humility and devotion, when darkness surrounded the earth and all its inhabitants. After Thou hadst rendered us free from earthly tyranny, Thou farther didst manifest thyself to us, and deliver to us thy law resplendent with purity and holiness, and thus Thou madest our minds also free, and ourselves the subjects to thy holy will; and in this manner Thou didst surround us with a shield of power, defending us from the contaminating influence of surrounding nations. Our tongues are too feeble to express our thanks, our words are insufficient to declare thy goodness, and our minds are lost in the contemplation of thy infinite wisdom. O then may it be thy will, Everlasting One! to accept with favour the insufficient words of our mouths, the humble thoughts of our hearts, as the only offering we can bring upon the altar of a contrite heart, which Thou hast promised through the mouth of thy prophets, Thou wouldst never despise. And protect farther thy people, and defend them from the attacks

of their adversaries, and fortify their hearts, so that they may live and serve Thee, till Thou sendest thy anointed one to promulge thy law to all the ends of the earth, when all will serve Thee in purity and holiness! Amen.

BRETHREN!

On a former occasion we proposed three questions for examination; the first was: "Is it reasonable to suppose that God should select Israel as his peculiar people?" the second embraced the inquiry: "Granted that the selection was reasonable, what advantage did the Israelites gain thereby?" and the third was: "Whether the Israelites had been rejected after having been once chosen?"—The two first questions were amply discussed, objections stated and refuted; and we came to the conclusion, that it is perfectly reasonable and consonant with the wisdom of God to believe, that He educated our ancestors to be worthy to become his servants by a long period of servitude in the land of the children of Ham, teaching them by a mighty display of his omnipotence, that he is the God to whom alone adoration is due from all mankind. This education was, as we have seen, intended to form a people on whom a permanent impression could be made, and who would be willing, at all times and under all circumstances, to serve the Lord who had redeemed them, and thus to be for all ages the depositary of the law of God, and a shining light to the nations of the earth.—In answer to the second question, we clearly demonstrated, that a selection by Supreme Wisdom for a purpose so grand is advantage enough, nay, more than any

other advantage which we can enjoy as individuals or as a nation. Only think, that the exertions each of us makes in the service of God redounds not only to his own advantage, but also to the civilization and redemption of the universe from the misrule of superstition and false worships. Surely, an end so great, so universally beneficial, is an object for the promotion of which the Almighty might well be supposed to exert his wisdom and his care, and a boon sufficiently great to be desired by the most exalted people. This is a brief outline of the arguments employed to answer the first questions consonantly with the assumption of the Israelites, that they were chosen as the depositary of the divine will, and that they have just cause to be thankful for his benefit thus bestowed, despite of its having exposed them at all times to the envy and persecution of the nations among whom they dwell.—Let us now proceed to examine by the light of Holy Writ and common reason the assertion of our opponents: "That, though we were once the chosen people, we have ceased to be so since a definite period of time; or, as they say, Israel the descendant of Jacob is no longer the spiritual Israel." The consideration of this question involves, as you will easily observe, something of a controversial nature, and therefore you might suppose that it is not properly a subject with which we should engage in a public religious discourse; but still it is one vitally important to us as Jews, and in my examination thereof, which I propose laying before you, I shall confine myself to the abstract question, and if what may be said controverts the doctrines of other sects, it shall be done without either attack-

ing them or noticing the books from which they are drawn and upon which they are founded. I may as well remark in this place, that in treating upon any topic of our religion, and in answering objections raised against it, it is quite sufficient to answer merely such objections, without reverting to the doctrines of any system different from ours; for our religion is not alone excellent above any other, but it dates also prior to any other; and consequently, we may argue the subject as though no other rule of faith existed.—But in some cases it may be necessary to advert to systems differing from or adverse to ours, when it may tend to confirm ourselves the more strongly in our belief; and then it is perfectly fair to discuss the subject controversially; for this is the only way by which truth can be sifted from error. I do not, however, think it at all necessary to offer an apology for the mode of discussion which I have adopted: only to point out to you the reasons which usually have swayed, and shall in future sway me in the elucidations of our holy law which I may have offered, or may yet continue to offer to your serious reflection.

Let us proceed with our examination of the question proposed: "Are the Israelites descended from Jacob the true spiritual Israelites, or have they been rejected after their having been once chosen?" To come to a clear understanding on this very important subject, it is first necessary to know what is meant by *selection*, and next by the term *rejection*.—When we say that we were selected as the people of God, we mean to say, that we were selected, chosen, elected, or withdrawn from among the multitude of nations,

separated from an affinity with them in their adoration of airy nothings, and set apart to be servants to the Most High and subject to his law. It makes no difference by what word we designate this action of God, whether we call it a selection, choice, election, or withdrawal; it was either or rather all combined. We say we were selected, because God in his supreme knowledge knew the disposition of our people to be best adapted for his purposes, as we read in Deuteronomy, xxxi. 21: "And it shall come to pass when the many evils and afflictions find him (Israel), then shall this song answer against him as a witness, for it (the song, and consequently the law in which it is contained), shall not be forgotten from the mouth of his descendants; for I know his inclination, as he doth this day, before yet I have brought him into the land which I have sworn."—This knowledge caused Him to choose us then from among the nations. He elected us to be his people by withdrawing us from the wickedness which had overspread the earth. Now, from what has been said, it must be self-evident that this choosing was for no other purpose than a moral good, and not to make us worldly great; and consequently, Israel can be the chosen servant, although he be poor, although he be a captive in a strange land. It is not to be denied that we were promised prosperity and peace, if we would be obedient to the commandments; but all of us know, how much ease and freedom from the cares of poverty enable the mind to be more devoted to the refined cares for the welfare of the soul, since it has not then to wear itself out with a constant chafing against the ills of life. So that worldly blessings were promised as the means

for the furtherance of the grand ulterior object, that is, to raise up a holy people, obedient in thought, word, and deed to the will of God. As we read (Deut. xxvi. 18, 19): "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all the nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour, and that thou mayest be a holy people to the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken." We thus see, that the reason of the selection was twofold: first, we were to become through obedience holy to God, and, secondly, to deserve happiness and to reach felicity through holiness.—The question now arises: "Was this holiness to be permanent or temporary?" By holiness is meant, nothing else than an obedience to the divine will so often and so uniformly exercised, as to invest the doers thereof with a peculiar capacity to merit, and to receive, the favour of God; and to resist more easily, than others not doing so or not so far advanced, the pressure of temptations; and to subject ourselves with more readiness and cheerfulness to whatever good or evil the Almighty may bestow; not to rise above ourselves when successful, nor to sink into gloom and despair when reverses come over us. It is, moreover, evident, that if any course of life, being in conformity to the once declared will of God, confers this state of holy feelings at one period of the world, it must continue to exert the same influence to the end of time. Or, in other words, since it was declared to be leading a holy life in the time of Moses, if a man acted conformably to the law revealed from Sinai: it follows, that

to act according to the same law at this moment is also leading a holy life, unless it can be demonstrated, that at any one time since the promulgation of the Decalogue, the Almighty descended in his glory and solemnly abrogated the law He then so solemnly enacted, when our forefathers stood at the foot of Sinai and saw the lightning flash, heard the thunder roll, and felt the mountain move. But where do we find any evidence of such an occurrence? At what period was there such a display of universal, public, and intelligible legislation of a new code? Truth will say: "At no time, in no place." And as the law was enacted for the purpose of being obeyed, or else its enactment would have been useless, and as at no time it has been abolished: to observe its precepts *is* leading a holy life; and consequently, Israel will be a holy people, if they continue to live according to the dictates of divine holiness. To sum up all that has been said above, in a few words, we may state: that the giving of the law was the virtual selection of Israel, and an obedience to this law confers upon Israel the just appellation of God's peculiar people; since at no time has any other people acted according to the law given to them, and never could it show any reason, why any other law should be considered as the true divine legislation.

We must now examine what can be meant by "Israel is rejected?" From the preceding it must be evident that Israel's rejection can only be imagined as at all possible by a promulgation of a new code of laws, by refusing which they place themselves out of the pale of divine favour. Farther, the evidence of such a promulgation must be so clear, as to leave no

doubt upon our minds as to its correctness. But to imagine even that a new code would or could be given, is to admit a caprice in the divine will, a vacillation in the judgment of God, which, far be such thought from us, would invest the Divine Essence with all the imperfections of humanity; whereas we are clearly told, that "God is no man that He could lie, and not a son of man that He could repent." Our assumption, therefore, based as it is upon reason and revelation, would in itself alone be sufficient to do away with the necessity for any farther argument. Yet where there are objections raised, it is proper to give them their utmost weight, the more radically to remove them. So then, admit that a new legislation were possible, still it must be confessed, upon an impartial investigation, that the fundamental principles of the moral and even of the ceremonial laws of our religion admit of no change. Let us take, for example, the first commandment proclaimed from Sinai: "I am the Lord thy God," which as you know is an announcement of our obligation to believe in a Divinity, everlasting, unchanging, and indivisible. Is it possible that any new code (even let it also emanate from God, which we however think impossible) could contain any thing at variance with this principle? Can God himself be at one time ה' אחד, *Adonai Echad*, the only everlasting Being, and cease to be so at another time? Ay, and this is the essence of the law, to know that there is an only God, everlasting and unchangeable, Creator of all, Ruler of all, Good above all, and Just above all; who, though incomprehensible, exists through all eternity, and to whom our conceptions of time, age, and change, are inappli-

cable.—Let us proceed to the second commandment and its specifications: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not make thyself any image; thou shalt not bow down to them, and shalt not worship them." This too is unchangeable in its nature. For as God is ever the same, so it must always be wrong, under any circumstance, to associate with Him, be his name praised for ever more, any other existing or imaginary being in worship, as by no contingency whatever can aught but the Creator and Father of all be God.—Again: "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." This precept too is immutable; from the words of the holy text it appears that its institution was based upon the history of the creation, and to remind us for ever, that after all had been created as now ordered around us in six days, the seventh was no day of creation, or, to use the words of Scripture: "After God had finished on the seventh day the work He had done, He rested on the seventh day from all the work He had done." Now it is evident that the reasons assigned for the observance of the seventh day apply to no other day of the week; for all six were days of creation, and only the seventh alone was a day of abstinence from work. In fact, the etymological meaning of the word Sabbath, from the Hebrew verb שבת (shabote), to cease, is *cessation*, and only by inference *rest*, for rest is the consequence of a cessation from labour. Another reason given for the observance of the seventh day is found in the repetition of the Decalogue (Deut. v. 15): "And thou shalt remember that thou hast been a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out from there, with a mighty hand and

a stretched out arm, therefore the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to make the Sabbath-day." The connection of this reason with the other, referring to the creation, has been explained by me in another place, and need therefore not be repeated here. But from the whole it will appear, that the institution of the seventh day of rest was to be permanent and unchanged, as the reasons given are also unchangeable, to wit, the creation in six days and the redemption from Egypt, since things past are from their nature not liable to be changed, because what is once done cannot be undone; for even if the effect be removed the event itself has occurred. We therefore find in our prayers the following formula for the *kiddush* of the Sabbath: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and hast found delight in us, and hast caused us to inherit with love and favour thy holy Sabbath, as a memorial of the work of the creation; for it is the first of the days of holy convocation, in memory of our redemption from Egypt."— The precept "Honour thy father and mother" must find a place in any divine legislation. "Thou shalt not commit murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal;" "you shall not defile yourselves by any creeping thing;" "you shall not lie;" "not follow the actions of the people of Egypt," and in fact all the prohibitions, and nearly all the positive commandments, will be found upon examination to be of that kind, that no law whatever, if of divine origin, could by any possibility gainsay them. The proof is easy, but would require more time than can be devoted to it now; and each of you can no doubt follow

out the argument by his own reflection. Now it follows, that any law to be divine must be just such a one as we possess; and any law differing therefrom in any material point, must be, of necessity, *not* of divine origin. For it is impossible to conceive how both propositions can be true, that God is One, Eternal, Unchangeable, and Indivisible,—and that He is divided, subject to change, and consisting of a plurality.—It cannot be said, that we must keep Sabbath on the seventh day, to celebrate weekly the wonder of the creation, and to change it to the sixth, first, or any other day, to celebrate any thing else.—It is incompatible with reason to admit that God instituted the prohibition of certain species of animals, because they would contaminate us, and that He should, for no reason that we can discover, abolish the prohibition.—It is not creditable to divine wisdom to institute the order of priesthood in the family of Aaron, and then to admit every one to the privilege, again without any reason,—to proclaim statutes and judgments as his will, and to revoke them at his caprice without any ground for such a change existing, at least such a ground as could satisfy our reason.—But as God's ways are just, as in Him there is no fault nor evil, we must come to the conclusion, that such inconsistencies are not of his sanctioning, and that whatever of error does exist, is of human invention; whatever of discrepancy to his law may be found has been introduced by men, and not by the All-wise, Unchangeable One.—But even yield all which our opponents can possibly demand; admit for a moment that things can be changed: we would ask, Where is the evidence of such change? where is the warrant that

we may depart from the ways of our ancestors? We may safely say, that there is no book warranting a belief in a plurality of the deity, which claims to be of divine revelation; there is no such code authorizing the transmutation of the Sabbath; there is no law permitting things prohibited in the Pentateuch. And if we admit the authority of *this* book, then it follows that unless there be a superior authority, no other law can claim our submission; and as there is no other law, consequently the law of the *Torah* is yet, and will be, binding on us and all who may join us. If now it is meant by "Israel is rejected," that the law of Israel has ceased to be the law of God: then has it been already established beyond contradiction, that this position is false and erroneous. But if it is meant to be understood that we have ceased to be the favourite people of God, and that others acting differently from us have now become the elect: then we are also prepared with proof to rebut the assertion. Yet even say, that we no longer enjoy any peculiar favour, ay, take all that is claimed, that the nations of the earth have been chosen: still we will reject all overtures to join ourselves to others, we will resist amalgamation with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might. No! never be it said that we serve our God from interest, or that we are envious that others too are chosen, even if we be rejected. Would to God that all the inhabitants of the earth were living in his service, walking before Him in fear, truth, and sincerity! would that our eyes might see, our minds be convinced that the world were filled with true adorers, even if we were, as we are now, poor, humble, trodden under foot, and de-

spised! Ay, if the annihilation of our national existence were to be the forfeit, let the partial evil be compensated by the universal good. Come then weal or wo, prosperity or affliction, life or death, be it ours to uphold the true law; let us be sunken but not degraded; let us even from amidst the depth of affliction cry to our God, and proclaim aloud his wonders which He has done for our ancestors, in redeeming them from the bonds of slavery, and giving them a law to free their souls from the trammels of sin and the thraldom of superstition. But no! Israel is not rejected! Israel is not cast off! Israel is yet the chosen people; and the Israelites descended from Jacob are still the bodily as also the spiritual Israel.—For know that even at the time when through our great crimes we had doomed ourselves to punishment, at the very time when prophets, inspired by the Supreme Judge, denounced dispersion and captivity over us, Jeremiah spoke thus by divine inspiration:

כה אמר ה׳ אם ימדו שמים מלמעלה ויחקרו מוסדי הארץ למטה גם אני אמאס בכל זרע ישראל על אשר עשו נאם ה׳: ירמ׳ לא׳ לז׳:

"Thus saith the Lord, If the heavens can be measured above, and the fastness of the earth be searched out beneath: then also will I reject the whole seed of Israel, for all which they have done, saith the Lord." xxxi. 37.

It were futile, and insulting to your understanding, to prove to you by demonstration that the Israel here spoken of is the seed of Jacob, whom the Lord called Israel; since the whole context evidently alludes to

no other. It is therefore perfectly plain, that we are promised that, despite of our transgressions, we shall not be cast off utterly, nor ever be suffered to be lost among the nations; as we also read in Lev. xxvi. 44: "And for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor despise them to destroy them utterly, to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God." Here again is a promise to the bodily Israel, who though in the land of their enemies shall not be totally rejected.

Having thus shown what is meant by the terms *selection* and *rejection*, it must strike you all, that it is perfectly reasonable and consistent with revelation to admit the first, but utterly repugnant both to reason and revelation to admit the other. It is, nevertheless, very evident why it is constantly repeated that we are rejected: it is to induce us to forsake the God whom we adore, the law that we love, and to mingle with the nations, to become an integral part of the great mass of the human family, and no longer to exhibit the spectacle of a people, dispersed all over the earth, still one and united by a belief in the ancient faith, upholden by a hope of better days. But it is our duty to reject such calls, whatever advantages may be offered to us thereby; for we must be convinced from the whole tenor of our history, that we never can gain the favour of God by apostacy, that is, by forsaking that law which He has established as the standard of right. Our opponents, however, say, that if it were true, that we yet continue to be the chosen people, that if our law yet continued to be the law of God, we would not be suffered to be in captivity and dispersed in every

corner of the globe; and they maintain that we are suffering, because we have rejected a better law, and have done certain wrongs which they lay as sins against us. Now, these assertions might hold good, if a better law actually existed, or if it were true that our dispersion had not been foretold by our own prophets, denounced as an inevitable consequence of the non-observance of that very law, which it is alleged has been abrogated.—The first assertion we have already proved as unfounded, for no new law whatever has been promulgated, much less a better one; and to the second, we answer, that from Moses down to Malachi punishment has been denounced against transgression, both punishment in this life and after death; and by most of the prophets our very captivity and dispersion all over the earth have been especially predicted in the manner we see it before us this day. Whatever other crimes then we may have committed, it is sufficient to account for our situation by referring to the constant infraction of the Mosaic law, which we and our ancestors have been guilty of; and consequently we must infer, that a farther dereliction will be still more signally avenged; for God is just and true, and no untruth and injustice can stand before Him. And let not the wicked flatter himself with the idea that he will escape the punishment under which Israel is suffering, by leaving the holy church for a junction with the multitude; he will be, it is true, no longer a captive, at least in its own estimation; but there are other pains far more to be dreaded than even death itself inflicted by the persecutor for an adherence to the law.—No, brethren, the law of God is not abolished; Israel is not rejected;

but only the light of the one is dimmed, because the other has sinned. But the day will come, when the lustre of both will be resplendent beyond compare, when God will be glorified, his law revered, and it be acknowledged by all, that we are God's people, a people faithful to the last, faithful in having so truly preserved the law intrusted to us as a deposit, amid so many difficulties; and faithful and true in having resisted for centuries of persecution, darkness, and worldly allurement, mingling with other nations, whose heart is not entire with the Lord our God. Then, indeed, will all the earth be an altar to the Lord; then, indeed, will He be declared, as in truth He is, the great King, whose glory fills the universe!

It is in our power to do much towards this great end by an observance of the law; and wherever there is in our captivity a temple of the Most High, there let us assemble, and proclaim that we will be persevering in the service of God till the end of time. Whenever then a new house of prayer is erected, let us regard it as an approach to the great end, as a step nearer to the glorious consummation, and let us upon every such occasion pray for the welfare of the community who have thus roused themselves to the service of the Lord.—The present holy day is, as you know, the anniversary of the promulgation of the law, and it has been chosen by a neighbouring congregation,* as a fit time for the dedication of a new house of worship to the service of the Most High. Let us then pray for the welfare of that community, who

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* The Congregation Sheerith Israel of New York.

have just finished the goodly work, and let us invoke blessing and prosperity upon their endeavours.

O Lord God, Father of mercy! we beseech Thee to regard with pleasure our exertions in thy holy service. Bless us and all those who call upon thy name; and O may it be thy will to infuse thy spirit of grace into the hearts of our brethren, who have finished and dedicated to thy holy name, a house of assembly and prayer. Let thy goodness guide them! let thy wisdom enlighten them! and upon the building send thy glory, so that from its walls, and the walls of all other places where Thou art worshipped, light and salvation may spread forth to the ends of the earth. And may temple after temple spring up among thy children, till from the farthest East to the utmost West, upon the great land and the islands of the ocean, thy name may be glorified from now and for ever. Amen.

Sivan 5th. } 5594.
June 12th. }

DISCOURSE XXXIII.

THE BLESSINGS OF REVELATION.

To the God of truth, whose word is truth, be praise and adoration from all ends of the earth, and may his name be glorified by all the children of men, from now and for ever. Amen.

BRETHREN!

How much have we to be thankful for to our great Father! and how can we do enough to show our grati-

tude! If we look upon ourselves as members of the human family at large, we will, and must, feel ourselves impelled by gratitude towards the Giver of light and life, who, in making man after his image, rendered him fit for the habitation of a spirit of wisdom and intellect; and not only gave to his outward frame a beauty of form superior to that of any other animal, but also infused therein a soul, a living principle, an intelligent mind, a spark divine, towering above all in majesty and strength. But if we go a step farther and view ourselves not only as men in general, but as Israelites, we shall have yet more cause for an indulgence of our gratitude towards the Supreme Disposer of all. For though the human mind reaches wonderfully far by its own researches, and embraces much by its natural organization: still without farther assistance, emanating immediately from the Divine Essence, it is but too apt to be misled by the semblance of good, and is often induced to mistake the wrong for what is right, because its means of information are insufficient or inaccurate. Thus, the most wonderful and comprehensive intellect, when unassisted by instruction, is apt to be in error; since it is next to impossible, during our short stay on earth, to obtain sufficient data to form a correct judgment upon every occasion. And this was wisely so ordained; for since men are unequal in their capacity, the wise few would under other circumstances have obtained unlimited sway over their fellows; and as the wise too can be wicked, they might have dictated laws to the rest of mankind, whose utility, to say the least, would have been questionable. But now, as it is the fixed law of humanity, that we are liable to err,

the assertions of every man, no matter how superior may be his endowments, will always be received with caution; and, therefore, if the good fail often of doing all the good they propose, the wicked are full as often thwarted in their evil endeavours. So we have in this case another exemplification of the fact, that there exists no evil which is not counterbalanced by an equal or even larger share of good. All this, however, goes to show, that human reason is fallible and of itself insufficient to perceive the light which it is able to acquire; and we find, therefore, that men, who have even made great progress in inventions and acquirement of sciences and knowledge, have very often been swayed in their moral conduct by unbelief, superstition, or bigotry. That is to say, some men wise in worldly matters have had no adequate perception of the nature of the Deity, as we find it declared in Scriptures, nor could their morality be compared to the standard laid down in the law of God. Take, for instance, the greatest and best of heathen philosophers, Socrates, and admit that he proclaimed nothing but what his inventive genius taught him, and assume that there is no exaggeration in the accounts we have of his virtues and resignation, of which latter, however, there must always be some doubt: still his notions of God were far from the ideas as we have them handed down to us through Moses. Socrates, as we are told, believed in a God, the Creator of the world, and the Judge of mankind; still he regarded the heathen gods as powers, though subordinate to the Supreme Being. Now, as I have said, Socrates, of all the heathens, approximated truth nearer than any other; and yet we find that he did

not reach all the truth. He was endowed by God with great discernment, with acute perception, with reasoning powers of no common kind; still he lacked the direct revelation, and thus he remained imperfect, when he had arrived so far already, that the next step would have been truth itself. He might have argued, since God created all and judges all, He needs not the assistance of subordinate powers; and since He alone is perfect and supremely wise, He can have no associates in his dominion; as our beautiful hymn so elegantly says: "And He is One, and there is no second to be associated with Him in the government;" and consequently, no other being, save God alone, deserves the worship of man. Nevertheless, with all his powers of reasoning, Socrates missed the great end; he imagined, as said, a Creator, associated with beings of an inferior, yet of a substantial and active power, and he worshipped the idols of the Grecians, and respected their tenets. If now, the wisest of heathens erred so far, how miserable must have been the mental state of those not so greatly favoured? if a Socrates's reasoning was insufficient to teach true wisdom, where can we look for it among the great multitude? It is, therefore, that we Israelites should reflect upon the great benefit conferred upon us by the divine revelation in our possession, where we are taught truth without disguise, morality without alloy, and religion without superstition! The Bible teaches us to acknowledge the existence of a Being, infinite in time, and greatness, and wisdom, existing before any thing else existed; the Creator of matter, the Organizer of nature, the Preserver of all things created, and the Governor of nature as or-

ganized; farther, that nature, organization, and in short, all existing things, and all the universe, are necessarily dependent upon Him, and upon Him alone, but that neither they, nor any thing else which can be conceived, are necessary to his existence or his happiness. So that we can very easily imagine God as existing without organization of any thing material, but that it is utterly impossible to imagine a world without a Creator. This Creator so great is also wise beyond compare. He is the Author of wisdom, consequently He is the wisest of all. He exists in every thing, and every thing exists in Him; consequently the actions of all, and the thoughts of all are known to Him. And as his knowledge and greatness pervade all, it can cost Him no effort to effect any thing which may please his will, and it requires no application of industry to make himself acquainted with the thoughts and actions of his creatures.—This is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; He is the adored and adorable One, who displayed to us his power and his goodness; and He is the Legislator who dictated to the people that He had chosen the law which He desired them to observe, that through it they might obtain the enviable distinction of being the wisest of nations, and the people most nearly connected through actions of piety, and holiness with their almighty Father.—We ought, therefore, to display, by all means in our power, our gratitude for these signal benefits, and we are ungrateful, if we omit any opportunity by which we can show, that we are not undeserving of the law which was given us, that we might, by observing it, become a light to the nations of the earth. To prove that our re-

ligion is a benefit and not a task is almost useless; for what can be more apparent, than that a state of barbarism is far inferior to one of civilization; that civil liberty is immeasurably superior to political thraldom; that wisdom is preferable to folly; knowledge to ignorance; and, lastly, that mental light—devotion—piety—the love of God—peace and contentment are to be preferred to mental darkness—superstition—immorality—idolatry—strife and warfare! And the effects of our law are the good things we have enumerated, the want of it has ever produced the opposite effects; and though among heathens we meet with examples of virtue, disinterestedness, and humanity, still we find them so blended with grosser desires and superstitious practices, that we can by no means view the virtues as at all pertaining to heathenism; on the contrary, we must regard them as exceptions sometimes met with, of evil even being occasionally the producer of good, or rather of evil not being altogether able to destroy totally the inclination to virtue and goodness. Besides, it must be borne in mind, that the Grecian and Romans, those nations of antiquity of whom we have the most authentic accounts, were in all likelihood greatly indebted for much of their knowledge of morality to the Bible, although it may not have reached them directly. It is well known, that for centuries anteceding the birth of Socrates there was a constant intercourse carried on between the countries of Asia Minor and Greece and its colonies. Many of the Grecians doubtless often appeared at the courts of the Persian kings and their satraps; these were all, more or less, acquainted with the Jews, and,

therefore, the Jewish law also must have become known, and when known it must of necessity have attracted attention, if not admiration. Now, if even the Grecians never associated with the Jews directly, which is, however, too improbable to be believed, still they doubtless became familiar with the law, as said, at least secondhandedly. Farther, it is likely, that a learned man catching a glimpse, as it were, of those sublime truths to which the mass of his countrymen were strangers, may have promulgated them, to increase his own importance, as an emanation of his own fertile invention, or as the special revelation of a deity or a demon, made known to him alone. However, we will not insist upon this hypothesis as a solution of the doctrines arrived at by the Greek philosophers, but merely to show to the unbeliever, that the existence of doctrines of a nobler cast than the vulgar superstition generally acquiesced in can be accounted for, on rational grounds, as being derived mediately or immediately from the great source of wisdom which now illumines the world; and let me add, that this point has been too much overlooked by those great admirers of heathen philosophy who, one would judge from their mode of speaking, had discovered in the remains of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, perfect substitutes for the sublime truths of revelation. It belongs not to our discussion in this place to review this subject in all its bearings, although a great deal more could be urged in favour of our views in connexion with this very topic. But even if we allow the intuitive knowledge of the learned men of antiquity and of the present time, they merely prove the exceptions to the

general rule, which we have so often laid down and maintained, that the Bible is the only source of true civilization and piety, and that every system, however great and ingenious, is far behind it in beneficial effects upon the general welfare and salvation of mankind.

Thus also it is not to be denied, that under the dominion of the Bible, or in other words in the theocratic commonwealth of the Israelites, crimes were committed, a state of warfare indulged in, violence perpetrated, and idolatry introduced; but this was not in consequence of the divine legislation, but in palpable and open violation of it; and how signally was this aberration avenged! Our sacred temple was levelled to the ground, our cities were burnt, our youths were led to the scaffold, our wise men stabbed and slaughtered, and our priests made the victims upon the very altar where they administered the sacrifices of the Lord, and the remaining few were led into captivity. The light of the law has, through our sins, become dimmed; the name of Israel has been rendered a reproach and a byword; and the worship of the Most High has, alas! to our shame, be it spoken, been more and more looked upon with indifference! We have been punished for our sins; but instead of our repenting and acting differently from the conduct of our ancestors, who perished in their transgressions, we have added wilful wickedness to their trespasses, and thus perpetuated the wrath which had been poured out as a warning to others, as the admonishing voice of Heaven: "Go ye and repent, and why will ye die, O house of Israel!" It will therefore be evident, that not by fault of revelation

have crimes been multiplied, but in despite of its beneficent precepts; and therefore the assertion made in the beginning of this address holds true, that we are bound by the strongest bonds of gratitude to testify our thanks to our almighty Redeemer for the great benefit of a revealed religion so bountifully bestowed, and to demonstrate ourselves not unworthy of a gift so great, which is to lead us in this life, which is to watch over us when we lay ourselves in the sleep of death, and which is to delight us when we awake to everlasting life, to unending blessedness! Now, from the very nature of man, that is to say from his utter incapacity to render God any benefit, the nature of the gratitude can easily be inferred, that is, man to show that he is deserving of the gift we have just mentioned, should actually prize it, look upon it as the best gift Heaven could bestow to bless mankind, and prove this regard by a due observance of the divine precepts. In short, Israel, to be truly grateful, should be truly a faithful, obedient, and pious people; no other means exist to prove that God's gift was not unworthily bestowed. But unfortunately a change has come over the face of the earth, and the dark ages of superstition, of intolerance and persecution have been succeeded by the more direful one of unbelief, of irreligion, and licentiousness; and a rational belief and a filial devotion to our God and Father are looked on with contempt, and the servants of God are held in little repute, their doctrines find but unwilling listeners, and religion is, to use the emphatic words of Scripture, thrown behind the back of each of us as something too insignificant to deserve the attention of a race so far ad-

vanced in science and knowledge as to be beyond instruction, as too elevated to need to be taught of Heaven. This is a mournful picture, but to our shame be it said, a true one nevertheless of the spirit of our age, and of that which has immediately preceded us. Doctrines have been promulgated, and promulgated too with a zeal which would have graced a holy cause, which, if followed up in general practice, would totally subvert religion, would sever as it were the bond which unites man to God, and would cast loose the ties of civilized society, and would give free vent to the unbridled action of the basest passions. Ay, and we Israelites especially have felt the sting of the serpent of unbelief which has been so dreadfully active; we, who of all men should have been the best prepared to resist, have yielded ourselves basely, have been overcome without a struggle almost. It is useless to flatter ourselves, that we are not open to the reproach of shameful dereliction from the good ways of our ancestors; for we have retrograded, and fallen off with dreadful rapidity from the path of righteousness.—Apostacy also has become so common, as scarcely to excite any longer the least degree of surprise; we have quite contentedly mixed ourselves with the nations; we have studiously concealed our being Israelites; we have carefully copied the follies and vices of others, even whilst we have neglected to imitate their virtues; and, to be brief, we must be silent, we cannot gainsay, when we are told that infidelity has made fearful progress among us.—We are ignorant, and wish not to be informed; we are spoken to, and will not listen; we are admonished to beware of the wrath to come, but too much of the world is

in our hearts; too many occupations are to be attended to; too much wealth must be amassed; too much pleasure must be tasted; too many passions must be gratified; too much ambition must be nurtured; too much greatness must be acquired; and at last too much pride has taken its abode within our souls, and has raised such a tumult of passions, of grovelling low desires, of exalted ambitious views, of self-importance, that nothing can be heeded but what relates to ourselves, as though each individual were all in all, and all beyond him as nothing in the balance. We talk of the light of science as incompatible with revelation; and when asked, why? we begin to hold forth about the absurdity of one part of belief, about the blind devotion to dogmas, acquiescence in things not understood; and, strange inconsistency! those very ones that speak so much of the incompatibility of religion with the light of science never did examine the doctrines of faith for themselves; they are ignorant of the Bible, and, more strange to say, of the very sciences which they profess to venerate so much; and all their haranguing about the absurdity of belief is founded upon hearsay, or upon the assumption that it is unwise to suppose that laws enacted three thousand years ago should be useful still. It is marvellous how little reason there is for infidelity, how weak the grounds are upon which unbelief rests for support, and how the contrary of the foregoing assertions is true; for all science tends to confirm the truth of the law of God, if properly examined, without the jaundiced view, without the hoodwinking of infidelity. But nothing checks us when we are determined to follow

the bent of our inclinations; every thing is then made subservient to our preconceived opinions; and it is almost useless to endeavour to argue unbelief out of its erroneous notions. Conviction is spurned as something contaminating, and sound argument is met by abuse; and if even the last is encountered by mildness and meekness, still a deaf ear is turned, so long as the volcano of passions has not exhausted its desolating fire. Is it now wonderful that the teachers of the law are silent? that their spirit becomes faint? that they almost determine to retire from the contest and to mourn in secret over the depravity of the age, over the vineyard of the Lord because it is desolate? Truly, brethren, this is a time of great evil; daily, matters are assuming a more dreary aspect; those who formerly yet adhered a little are now also falling off; parents who still adhere neglect to teach their children the way of godliness, or even permit them, nay, compel them, to neglect the holy law for which they themselves profess a mock veneration; the sacred language, in which God spoke, in which the law was given, is not regarded; men speak of abolishing it, and why? because they are ignorant, and are too indolent to make themselves acquainted with it; teachers enough there would be if they were desired —but they are not desired, and the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and the knowledge of the law of God are diminishing, waning, but not perishing! For this state of things will not last; the age of superstition, of a belief in demons, in witchcraft, in phantoms of the imagination, which once was so prevalent, that enlightened and liberal men doubted of the regeneration of the world, has passed away; and the present

dreadful time, when every thing sacred by age, hallowed through antiquity, is approached with rude and unholy hands, will also take its flight: when the lover of his God, the real benefactor of mankind, the sincere Israelite, will again raise his head, when his words will be listened to with pleasure, and his instructions received with avidity and satisfaction. If we will not by our own reflection, if we will not by our own impulse seek the Lord: then will He visit us with punishment, the race of the wicked will be swept from the face of the earth, and He will probe the remainder like the fanning-mill separates the chaff from the wheat; and if the remainder be but small, they will still constitute, although diminished, the people of God, the light of the nations. Often and often has Israel sinned, often and often have the wicked been plucked out and removed out of the vineyard of the Lord, the house of Israel; still has Israel never ceased to be a people, still has religion never been wanting of defenders. But why will we tempt the anger of God? why will we wait till the fire is kindled which will consume us? We have every inducement to be a religious, a good, a holy people; superstition has no hold on our faith; sciences can be encouraged by the sincerest, the most pious Israelite; the pursuit of gain within lawful limitations is permitted, nay, encouraged by our law; pleasure too may be moderately enjoyed. What then is prohibited? the excess of every thing; and is it too much to ask of man to abstain from inquiring after the essence of the Deity, from inveighing against the ways of his Maker, when he must be convinced, that no research can reach God, that science cannot

penetrate Him, and that human ken, human infirmity cannot measure the All-wise—the Infinite—the Perfect—the Just—the Omnipotent by the puny scale of the small portion of wisdom allotted to us?—Has not God a right to demand of us to observe a day of rest to be devoted to his service—and to confine ourselves in our dealing with the world, in the pursuit of lawful gain, to such limits and checks of honesty and neighbourly love as He has prescribed in his book of the law?—And, lastly, has not Heaven a right to tell man: Thus far pleasures are lawful, the rest are injurious and unholy? Common reason will dictate the answers to our questions, and humanity ought to bow with profound reverence to the decision thus given by the all-wise One, and to submit to his rule with meekness and patience. And let us but pursue the lives of the godly and of the sinner; and, if nothing else will satisfy us, this inquiry must, and dictate to us the lesson which is hourly preached by the whole universe: "That in the way of piety alone there is life." The presumptuous sinner says in his heart: "There is no Providence." He pursues the career of voluptuousness, of aggrandizement, of ambition, and hesitates at nothing; every thing to him is lawful; he defies the Deity; he throws out taunts against the Cause of causes; but suddenly his end comes; and scarcely is his blasphemy uttered, when off he is hurried, unconscious even of the moment which terminates his worthless existence, and he leaves behind him a name, loaded with horrible notoriety, and men say of him: "So perished one who forgot his God." Or even let his fate be a milder one; let him be smitten with sickness, the common lot of humanity;

let him be conscious of the approach of death: what agony, what horror fill his mind! I speak not of the ignorant, the brutelike infidels, for they are never cited as examples by their admirers, but of those who employed their talents in misleading the world, or who concealed a course of infamy under the outward cloak of conformity with religion; for no sooner do they feel that their end is coming, than they dread its approach, they curse themselves, beg of men to grant them life! life! they hope when too late to make amends for past misconduct, and at length pass away with the horror of dissolution before their eyes, and filled with dread at meeting their awful Judge, who will not, cannot, pass over talents shamefully wasted, a life misspent in wickedness, hypocrisy, or unbelief. —Thus perished a Korah, a Dathan, and an Abiram; thus perished a Voltaire, and many an infidel of modern and ancient times. But let us look at the reverse of the picture. There walks the righteous; his heart is true with his Maker; his mind is filled with love towards mankind; in short, he is the child of God, the brother of his fellow-man; and when his task is ended, he can look with composure upon his reunion with God, for he is conscious he has nothing to dread in the judgment to come. And thus departed Jacob, Moses, Elisha, and many other good men of Israel, as well as of other nations, and no doubt thus will pass away many now living, and many yet to be born. We, therefore, read in the portion of the law read today (Numbers xxiii. 14):

תמת נפשי מות ישרים ותהי אחריתי כמהו׃
במד׳ כג׳ יד׳:

"May my soul die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like him."

Bileam had been sent for by the king of Moab to pronounce a malediction upon Israel, as Balak vainly imagined that this would enable him to exterminate the dreaded and hated race. For reasons known to Him, God at first refused to let Bileam depart upon this errand, but ultimately told him that if he pleased he might go, but should not dare to say any thing after his arrival contrary to the word of God which might be revealed. The gentile prophet felt himself elated with this concession, and at once resolved to go, and the very next morning he commenced his journey; upon the way a messenger of the Lord opposed his progress, for the reason given: "Because the hated journey had been too suddenly resolved upon;" but still he was allowed after a slight detention to proceed; and when arrived at the court of the king of Moab, he accompanied the latter to the hill of the national idol, Baal, whence he could see a part of the Israelitish camp. Here he prepared several sacrifices and awaited in a lonely spot the revelation of God. The revelation came; but in place of a curse, he was filled by inspiration with amazement and respect for the glory and great destiny of our people, when we had not yet existed quite forty years. And thus he spoke:

"From Aram did Balak lead me, Moab's king from the mountains of the East, Come curse for me Jacob, and come denounce Israel. What shall I curse, whom God not curseth, and what shall I denounce, whom God not denounceth? For from the top of rocks I see him, and from hills I behold him; behold the

people, it dwelleth alone and is among nations not numbered. Who counteth the dust of Jacob, and numbereth the fourth part of Israel? May my soul die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like him!"

Filled with the knowledge of the future greatness of the then wandering people, a nation then without a home, a nation then without a country, save a small strip of land along the Jordan's banks, Bileam assured his friend Balak, the king of Moab, that it is useless to curse those whom God wishes to bless; and in another place he predicted the farther rise and progress of the star which shall rise from Jacob, and the rod which shall uprise from Israel, and alluded thus to the kingdom of the blessed anointed of the Lord, whom Jacob foretold when his end was approaching, whom Moses saw in his prophecy, and of whom Isaiah so beautifully sung, when predicting: "And a rod shall come from Jesse's stem, and a branch shall flourish from his roots." And then placing before his eyes the whole glory of the people, as a nation and as individuals, he wished that his death might be the tranquil, the peaceful death of Jacob, whom God called Israel, and that he might partake of the happiness which was at length to befal the nation springing from him. Let our desire be the same, friends and brethren! but whilst desiring, let us also endeavour to deserve it; let us teach our children the way they should go, let us love our fellow-men truly and sincerely, let us dispense good wherever we may be, and let us also observe the precepts of the law, and reverence the sabbath, and be mindful of what Isaiah says (lviii. 13–14):

"If thou restrainest thy foot on the Sabbath, and refrainest from doing what thou desirest on my holy day, and callest the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honoured, and thou honourest it by abstaining from following thy usual occupations, or seeking thy own pleasures, or speaking words: then shalt thou find delight in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ascend upon the high places of the land, and will let thee enjoy the heritage of thy father Jacob—for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

O our Father above, fill us with thy grace, let us receive thy blessing, and when the hour of our departure comes, strengthen us with thy spirit, and lead us without perturbation, without the fear of death, from this life unto thy judgment, and grant to us and all the departed of thy people Israel, the joys of everlasting life and unending happiness, which Thou hast decreed to those that love and fear Thee. Amen.

Tamuz 11th. } 5594.
July 18th. }

DISCOURSE XXXIV.

THE PERMANENCE OF THE LAW.

PROTECTOR of Israel! Thou who hast ever shielded thy people in their dispersion and captivity, bestow also upon us thy watchfulness and goodness, and defend us from the attacks which our adversaries and the enemies of thy holy law may plan against us, and

fortify us in thy faith; so that we may always exist to glorify thy exalted name, and proclaim thy glory in whatsoever place whither thy providence may lead us. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In a former address to you I attempted to exhibit some few reasons, why we should prefer the light of revelation to the best doctrines elicited through reflection by the most eminent of heathen philosophers, even conceding that these doctrines should have originated with the heathens themselves. It was then shown how far from truth were the noblest conceptions of the human mind, and how simple, yet how beautiful were the institutions which Moses delivered unto Israel, no less in practice than in precept. But still some doubter may say: "That it is one thing to admit the beauty and usefulness of these institutions; yet something very different to believe them as essential to salvation, or to concede their unwavering truth and permanency."—Now if it were, that doubts occur only to the minds of the vicious or the non-Israelites, it were perhaps useless to trouble you, my brethren, with a refutation of such doubts; but unfortunately, Israelites also do doubt, and even to the most pure in mind the intercourse with the world will occasion perplexing inquiries, which it may not be in his power so soon to solve, as may be conducive to establish his peace of mind.—We see around us men of various persuasions, and some also of no fixed moral principles: still every one claims of being in the right way, as though the right way, which from its simplicity and truth can be but one, were manifold

and diversified. We may go a step farther and maintain that, strictly speaking, there are but certain fixed actions, to do which is to do right; but where shall we find two persons exactly doing the same things, even assuming that they should maintain the same opinions? But this consideration, of the uncertainty whether we act at all times right or not, needs not to disturb us too much; since our almighty Father, knowing our imperfect organization, expects not perfection from us; as the Psalmist says: "And their heart was not true with Him, and they trusted not in his covenant. But He, the merciful One, pardoned their sin, and would not destroy; and often kept back his anger, and awakened not all his wrath. And He remembered that they were flesh." (Psalm lxxviii.) Still in point of fact, there is but one right way, and this way is the one pointed out by the revelation of God. For, the man of no principle, except his own vague ideas of right and wrong, can have no guide save interest and expediency; and as these guides are different with different persons, and constantly changing their position with the same persons even, it follows, that to measure the right by this standard would be to admit a constant change in its quality and application; and that which is wrong in one would be right in another; and what was condemned to-day might meet our approbation to-morrow. Such a rule of life would, in place of tranquillizing the mind and establishing peace in society, tend to disturb both the mind of the individual, and the welfare of the world at large, to such a degree, that the contemplation of it presents nothing but horror to the lovers of their species.—Where next shall we look

for the desired standard? From men in general, let us ascend to the favoured few, who are endowed with powers of intellect beyond their fellows; but are they capable of deciding so unerringly as to become our guides? do their bodies not sicken? do their thoughts never become clouded? remains their judgment always unimpaired? and has interest nothing to do in making their opinions turn to the right and left? and, lastly, are they infallible in their decisions? To all these questions, we must return an answer unfavourable to the idea of the expediency of adopting the promulgation of any one wise man as the standard of right; for even a Solomon may be obnoxious to the want of perfection, in goodness, in wisdom, and in consistency.—Let us next go into the assemblies of the honoured and great ones of the land; but there we shall find confusion even worse confounded. Interest there rules with a potent hand; popular favour is to be courted; popular applause is to be won; the million is to be propitiated; and each individual bows at the altar of fear and self-aggrandizement, and sacrifices to them often the dearest interest of his country, and tramples upon the rights and liberties of his fellow-men, to gratify his own vaunting ambition. Even if there arises occasionally a fearless man, who dares to hold up the mirror to the corruption which overspreads the state, who is bold enough to tell his compeers that they are ruining the commonwealth by the reckless course they are pursuing; where does he find listeners? where are those that follow his standard? And even let us suppose the patriot triumphant—does he not become in his turn the tyrant? Does he not practise the same revolting acts of op-

pression which caused the downfall of those against whom he strove so valiantly? And let us not forget the awful lesson which the history of a civilized country taught us not many years back, and whose crimes in the way of moral and political reform, or revolution I should have said, were so great as to cause one of the greatest defenders and promoters of its excesses to exclaim on the scaffold, as she yielded up her head to the axe of her executioner: "O liberty, liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!" Assemblies of the wise therefore cannot teach us what is right.—Let us next go among the religious sects, amongst whom the earth is divided. But there too the weakness of human nature will astound and baffle us. One will claim its doctrines to be derived from a god who walked on earth; and look into its rules, and you will see them claiming human sacrifices as a pleasant offering to its gods, and its temples you will find defiled by the blood of innocents. Another sect will teach you that all but its own adherents are children of perdition, and that its doctrines must be preached unto all men by fire and the sword. Another, and a numerous people it is, and its power is widely extended over the earth, its armies and its fleets are the terror of all nations, and its wisdom and its learning may well excite our astonishment, teaches that for the sake of saving mankind from everlasting damnation a portion of the deity became inclosed in a body of flesh, dwelt for a space of time among men, and then suffered death by the hands of those whom to save he was sent. Farther, that salvation is to be obtained only through a belief, or faith, as it is termed, in these supposed facts, and that he, who was thus

deputed, abrogated the covenant which the Lord of hosts had made with Israel, and that farther by our unwillingness to accept of the new covenant, as it is called, we forfeited our right and former claim as the elect people, and more still, that those nations which have adopted the new creed have been chosen in our stead, and that the new dispensation has been substituted as a better one and to the exclusion of the first covenant of God. Here you have briefly laid before you a view of the various rules of life which have obtained currency among mankind, and, with the exception of the small number of Israelites, all other men, under various modifications, are members of these several creeds, that is to say, they are either heathens, Mahomedans, or Nazarenes. To sift the evidences by which each of these various systems is supported, and to prove its insufficiency as the universal rule of right is easily practicable. For as to heathenism and the law of Mahomed, they can scarcely be presumed by their very followers to be based upon historical truth, even setting out of sight their doctrines of doubtful morality, although it may freely be conceded that the followers of these systems may nevertheless and in spite of the defectiveness of their codes be good and moral men.—An extended examination need not be gone into, as we live not among followers of Brahma and Mahomed, and since we are never in this country invited to join those sects. But in reference to the third class, the Nazarenes, we can briefly answer them: You say the ancient law was abrogated; admit it for argument's sake; but the question recurs, where are the new duties laid down in the new code which are to be followed in lieu of the precepts admitted

by you also as of divine origin? in what passage of your books have you any special legislation, unless it be a reference to the law and the prophets? And if the law and the prophets are sufficient to refer to, without enacting new laws, how can it be possible then that the law has been abrogated?—Farther, to establish the truth of any system based upon, as it is alleged, and confirmed by, and confirming the books of our canon, it must first be established that the new does not contradict and overthrow the old; but I need not tell you, brethren, that the doctrine of the sacrifice of a portion of the deity to satisfy the other portion is nowhere, as far as we Jews understand the Scriptures, as much as alluded to; for God and man to be one is repugnant to our ideas of the purity, indivisibility, and holiness of God; that the claim for a new code being established upon the ruins of the old is plainly contradictory of two various prophecies, one of which says: "And in thee also (meaning Moses) they shall believe forever" (Exodus xix. 9); and the other enjoins: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I have commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, statutes and judgments" (Malachi iii. 22). So then it will appear that the first prophet under the Mosaic dispensation, as well as the last of the series of those illustrious men who taught the world wisdom and piety, testified as emphatically as words can make it, that the law and statutes proclaimed at Horeb were to be permanent, fixed, and unchangeable. And we come at length to the proposition which clearly follows from what has just been said, that the books called the Old Testament by the Nazarenes are either false or true alone, to the exclu-

sion of any other book or system, and that, admitting their truth and the necessity of obeying them to insure salvation, they in no way concede the truth of any other additional book or code, or the obligation of believing a single word or idea in addition to what they contain.—We are fully aware, that each class of men and also every individual supporting certain ideas concerning the rule of right can, by some show of reason, maintain their own side of the question, and to the superficial observer they may appear to refute triumphantly all objections; but let me assure you, that in no one instance yet have our opponents been able to gainsay our assertions, and only by imposing silence on us through the terror of persecution have they answered our arguments. Let it not be imagined, however, that it is arrogance in us to assume that we alone are right; for even repudiating all belief in revelation, it must still be confessed, that at a very early period we alone rejected the follies of superstition, and adopted a system of moral philosophy in the highest degree sublime and beautiful, as has been shown on a former occasion, so that in place of a disbelief in a direct revelation removing our astonishment, it increases it the more. We have now arrived at the following conclusions, that a belief in a revelation is the only consistent belief, since, besides its reasonableness, all the world, with but few exceptions at most, acquiesce in it under some shape or other; and that it is equally reasonable to look for the rule of right in the Mosaic revelation alone, though we do maintain, that it is futile to look for it elsewhere. Understand the question well: it is not said that no person other than a Jew can be good, but

merely that no one can be upon the right way, unless he obeys the statutes of the Mosaic code, and that moreover it is not being a believer merely of the doctrines of this law which constitutes the Israelites, but the obeying them. Having premised thus much, and shown where we can find an unvarying guide to righteousness and justice, we will dispense for the present with all arguments to prove the tenets of our religion to be good and beneficial, and merely confine ourselves to the subject we proposed for our consideration, to exhibit the necessity of believing in the truth of the law, its permanency, and its necessity to insure our salvation. It needs not much penetration to discover, that the God who created all, and who governs all, is able to punish and reward every man according to his merits. Farther, that if we see certain acts of God upon earth coming in consequence of certain acts of men, we must say, that because of these acts of men God acted so on his part. And lastly, if certain events have been foretold as sure to happen in consequence of certain deeds, we must acknowledge, if the prediction is verified, that because of the conditions accomplished, the predicted events came to pass, and consequently that the person who made the prediction was accurately informed of the future, that is to say, he spoke the truth; and as no man can of his own accord know what the future will bring forth, he must have been informed by the omniscient One, or in other words, that the person thus speaking was a prophet of God, and by Him inspired to speak a message to mankind for their guidance and to warn them of the consequences of their doings. If now we apply these conditions to our law, we shall find that

it can stand the test of these principles of sound reason. For as to its doctrines in the first place, we are taught to believe that only from the Creator alone proceed all events, that through his blessing countries are at peace and happy; the fields are clad with verdure; the trees loaded with fruit, and beasts and men sated with bounty. In the next place we must discover that in consequence of our people disobeying the will of God, as laid down in the Bible, they were visited with signal punishment, and as reasoning beings we must conclude that the punishment was sent by the all-wise Judge to avenge the infraction of the law. Lastly, upon inspecting the Bible, we shall find a number of predictions made at various times from Noah, the second father of mankind, to the termination of the prophecies, some of which have been fulfilled, others which are now in process of being fulfilled, and others, to judge from analogy, which will eventually be accomplished. All this proves, that those persons who pronounced these predictions were inspired by the Disposer of events, and consequently, that as children of this Disposer of all we are bound to believe and confide in his annunciations; for to disbelieve would be in effect to deny the truth, which, even if there were no punishment consequent upon disbelief, would be to confide in our own fallible reason, or what we might be pleased to call reason, in preference to yielding our judgment to Him who is infinitely wise and infallible. To demand therefore to rest our hopes of salvation on a belief in the holy law and obeying its precepts, is only to ask of us mortals to confide and acquiesce in the judgment of the Source of all wisdom, and to follow such rules (which,

coming from One who never changes, must naturally be unchangeable,) as have been laid before us as the everlasting rule of life. It will therefore strike you, brethren, that the denunciation of punishment was not a mere idle threat, and that the punishment itself was not sent merely to gratify a feeling of revenge, for revenge is a passion, and passions are incompatible with the nature of the Deity; but the punishment was announced as impending to warn mankind of the dangers they were incurring for disobedience: and when they turned a deaf ear to the admonitions so kindly vouchsafed, punishment, the natural consequence of sin, soon followed to prove the truth and justice of God. It is thus, therefore, that the accomplishment of the words of the law proves its truth, and its truth being proved, it remains for us to adopt its precepts and to follow the path pointed out by it as the road to everlasting life, as a measure of prudence and safety.

Permit me now to draw your attention to the terrible admonition which Moses pronounced a few days before his removal to the land of everlasting life, when he was about to resign the shepherd's staff, he had wielded so long and so faithfully over the flock of the Lord, into the trusty hands of his servant and follower, Joshua, the son of Nun. Many miracles had been wrought by his means; many a time had doctrines of peace, laws of life, and statutes of salvation been promulgated through him; many battles had been fought under his guidance; often also had sinners been rebuked through the spirit that spoke within him; and just before his departure he only needed yet to leave behind him a meas-

ure, by comparing which with future events all succeeding ages might have an unerring means to verify the revelation given to the Israelites at the time they went out of Egypt. Blessings were promised for obedience,—temporal prosperity on the one hand, and a spiritual holiness on the other; a peaceful people and a holy nation should Israel become, if they would consent to be in truth the adorers of the God of their fathers. But the wrath of Heaven was to be kindled against them, if they transgressed the covenant which had been made with them, to prove to them in their latest generation, that only through obedience to the divine will could Israel be happy. O dreadful indeed were the words which fell upon the ears of our ancestors, when they were told that, "They should grope about at midday like the blind gropeth about in the dark," ay, that their afflictions should be so great, that they should be so far removed from friendly assistance, as the blind who gropes his way in darkness with no kind hand to save him from stumbling; and how truly has this been fulfilled! Ages of suffering have passed over us, and even now our afflictions are not ended! How many thousands were slaughtered, how many innocents were plundered for no evil they had done, but solely because they bore the hated name of Jew. And who heeded their sufferings? Who cared for the blood that flowed? Who minded how many stakes were kindled? It was but the Hebrew that lay in the dungeon; it was but the Israelite that groaned under the blow; it was but the Jew that shrieked as the flames slowly devoured him! And were it not that we had been dispersed, were it not that persecution could not overtake us simultane-

ously in all countries, the name of the seed of Jacob had long since perished. But thanks be to Him who woundeth and also healeth, and who prepareth the balsam, even before the blow is struck! He caused us, when wandering from our land, to be scattered wherever mankind dwelt, and always moved some to compassionate us, when others laid snares for our feet. So that we were preserved, in diminished numbers indeed, but still preserved, a nation one and undivided, to glorify the Name, the honoured and fearful, the everlasting Lord our God. In this also we discover the quality of goodness of the most extended kind and of that mysterious nature to which the prophet alluded when saying: "In anger thou rememberest to be merciful." (Habakkuk iii. 2.) It were easy and at the same time highly instructive to compare every one of the curses with its accomplishment; but this would lead us farther than necessary, and I believe that every one of you no doubt can find a multitude of illustrations from his own reading and observation. But one of the most striking I will merely refer to before closing the subject for the present, and elucidate a little more largely its literal accomplishment.

והיית לשמה למשל ולשנינה בכל העמים אשר ינהגך ה׳ שמה : דברי׳ כח׳ לו׳ :

"And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb and a by-word among all the nations whither the Lord will lead thee." Deut. xxviii. 37.

If ever any prophecy was triumphantly vindicated by its accomplishment, it is surely this dreadful one

spoken by the father of the prophets. Understand its full import, and you will need no farther illustration of the truth of Moses. The Israelites were at that time a wandering people, scarcely known to those nations even that were leading their usual predatory and erratic life in the great deserts of Arabia, where the Israelites had been tarrying for forty years. It was but a few months previous to this time, that the first dawning of the accomplishment of the prediction relative to the inheritance of the land of Canaan had taken place, and Moses himself announced that he would have to leave the actual fulfilment of the promises made through him to be brought about by another. Yet it was under such circumstances, where no human wisdom could foresee what actually has occurred, that the gifted above all men laid open the coming, dark, frowning, future, before the people whom he had guided, and warned them of the dismemberment of that splendid, happy government which had been just established, and told them that the national name should become a proverb and a byword among all the nations of the earth. And, alas! how has our people been hurled about! How has our mighty state fallen! And how has the enemy, that ne'er before durst even to approach the walls of Jerusalem, the chosen city of the Lord, and where He had promised to let his glory dwell, broken down its walls, battered its gates, devastated its houses, profaned the temple, and burnt down the sanctuary with the fire of desolation! And the remnants of Israel—how have they been scorned, derided, hated, and spurned! How insultingly have our foes borne their triumph; and although the age

of active persecution may be said to have passed away from many countries, still how little fellow-feeling is manifested for the Jew! Ay, we are said to dwell in darkness, when the law of God is our light. The Almighty is invoked to change our heart; yet it is not to bring us back to his service, but to cause us to adopt systems which we loathe, against which our spirit revolts, and which we have rejected amidst persecutions innumerable, which we scorned, though contumely and death were our only other alternative! Besides, how many means are tried to wipe away the hated name of the Hebrew from amongst men! How many bribes are offered for apostacy—how many snares laid to lead us astray; —to the Jew as such the gates of preferment are closed; but let him only pretend to change, and riches, honours, pleasures, and offices are offered to him as the reward meet for his baseness! And if we come to claim equal rights from the land where we are born, whose burdens we bear equally with the other inhabitants, whose homes and whose liberties we are willing to defend with our treasures, with our blood, and with our lives: we are told, that it is impossible to put us on a level with other men,* that it would be blasphemy to think of emancipating the Jew, as they call it! But have we no claims upon our fellow-men of all creeds? Is not civilization indebted to us? Would sciences have flourished had we not been? Would the liberties of mankind have

* Since this was written a great change for the better has taken place in political relations; but private prejudices still remain as potent as ever. May, 5627.

been so well secured were it not for our law, the promulgation of which broke the bonds of slavery, and rent asunder the chains of superstition under which all Europe groaned during the middle ages? But what avails it to hold up our claims to the equality of rights, which, if even conceded in words, would in all likelihood be denied to us in effect, as long as the prejudice against our name does last, and whilst other sects look upon us as their inferiors, or as heretics to be pitied for their blindness even if tolerated from mere compassion. Virtue, wisdom, and learning, nay the comeliness of the outward person are considered as qualities of rare occurrence amongst Jews; and low cunning, grovelling meanness, a desire for overreaching the unwary, and base ingratitude, are looked upon as the proper characteristics of the Hebrews. And when our excellences are too marked, when our virtue is too self-evident, when our disinterestedness challenges the judgment of doubt even, it is then said: "It is a pity they are Jews!" Let no one say, that this is a picture of vulgar prejudice merely; would that it were so! It is our portion from the world, whether learned or unlearned; it is the contumely attached to us for our manifold transgressions; it is the indelible stain which God has fixed upon our race for their stiffnecked disobedience.

"Thou shalt be an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword." If a man reverts to our history and follows our onward course from a nomadic tribe to a powerful kingdom under the wise Solomon, with so many bounties scattered over a fertile soil, with institutions so greatly tending to spread peace and con-

tentment, with a Providence watching as it were peculiarly over our welfare: astonishment will be excited at our blindness in throwing away such blessings by the sheer folly of obeying our own impulses in preference to the dictates of Heaven!—If admonitions are addressed to a people and they are warned by their preachers, they will be told, that their punishment will be equal to that of Israel unless they repent!—If an outcast from divine favour is to be painted, the picture of the dispersed Jewish nation recurs to the mind of the thinking; and be the sect heathen, Mahomedan, or Nazarene, nay, even the blind infidels, they value themselves especially that they are exempt from the curse of being numbered amongst us!—Thus, O great God! has thy anger reached us; thus, O merciful One! have thy arrows pierced our hearts! But just are thy ways! We were tired of serving Thee, we loathed thy covenant, we sought to imitate the ways of those who knew not thy service; and we now must serve those whose friendship we courted, and bear the shame of our iniquities!

Yes, brethren, we were warned that the outraged covenant cried aloud for vengeance; but what did we care? we vainly thought the evil would not come, perhaps we fancied the Almighty unconscious and heedless of our course; but the evil at length did come, and we were thus taught that the law given through Moses was true, unchangeable and necessary to our welfare. Even the persecutions we have had to endure since our dispersion have tended to confirm the truth of prophecy, and to keep us unmingled and unpolluted by an intercourse which the hollow friendship of the gentiles would perhaps have produced.

Israel has been shaken by the storms of adversity, but not overwhelmed, as the prophet of Shiloh, the aged and blind Achijah, spoke to the wife of Jeroboam: "And the Lord will smite Israel, as the reed is shaken in the water, and drive Israel from off this good land, which He hath given to their fathers" (1 Kings, xiv. 15), because they had incensed the Lord. The punishment, as we have seen, has not been withheld, but neither has the blessing been denied; for as the reed can be shaken by the flood and wind, but through its natural elasticity it resists them both, so that it is not broken by what would have felled the mighty oak or rooted up the cedars on Lebanon: so have we also constantly risen after every persecution, and have remained unbroken despite of the thousands of ills which have assailed us; and regardless of the contempt of the world, and heedless of the calumnies of the gentiles, we are still the most beloved, the protected people of the Lord. Can there be a stronger argument of the truth of the law, which has preserved a handful of people entire, when the mightiest empires have been swept away and have left not a wreck even behind? Let this therefore be our consolation, that we are in possession of the rule of right; a rule handed down to us from heaven; a rule under which in God's own good time all nations will be made happy, when it will be fulfilled what Isaiah foretold: "Rise and shine, for thy light hath come, and the glory of the Lord hath shone out upon thee. For, behold! darkness covereth the earth, and a thick fog the nations, but over thee the Lord will shine, and his glory will be seen over thee. And

nations shall go by thy light, and kings by the brightness of thy shining." (lx. 1–3.)

O may our eyes behold thy glory, O Father of Mercy! and may we all see thy return to Zion. Amen.

Elul 15th. } 5594.
Sept. 19th. }

DISCOURSE XXXV.

PRAYER, FASTING, AND CHARITY.

AGAIN sustained by thy grace, O our Father! we have been permitted to begin another year; again we have been suffered to commence a new period, in which we may gain thy favour by an obedience to thy law, or seek thy forgiveness by repentance and a return to the ways of piety. Behold us now, O our God, and God of our fathers! assembled in thy house, asking thy indulgence to our sinful acts, and to forgive us according to thy unending mercies. Not through our own merits pardon us, but because Thou art kind and gracious; and if our sins are manifold, if our deviations have been too numerous, then let thy chastening hand fall lightly on us, so that, shown the right path by thy all-wise instruction, we may be revived and live before Thee, to serve Thee, to adore Thee, to fear Thee, and to acknowledge Thee alone our God, our Father, and our Protector. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Human life has been aptly compared to a journey,

which every one has to travel to its close. On this journey all are met by dangers which they must overcome, and by adventures which they must encounter, and no rest can be expected till the journey is finished, as the dangers thereof are constantly renewed, and continually varying their position, so that the utmost vigilance is requisite to remain unharmed amidst the difficulties, and to avoid getting into devious by-ways, which encircle the road of life on all sides. But suppose a traveller should lose his way, and find himself at a distance from the path he is to travel, would it not become necessary for him to endeavour to regain the highway, if he is at all desirous of reaching his original destination? and if he is unable to correct himself, would it not be well to ask of those whom he meets for directions how to proceed? And if he is unmindful of his progress, if heedlessly he takes no care whether he be right or wrong, whom but himself can he blame, if at last he finds his onward progress debarred by insurmountable obstacles? Just so is it with those who travel the path of life; for whether we are willing or unwilling to make any exertions, we are once here, and even must exist our allotted space below, till our Father calls us back to Him. And whilst here, we must be agents, must be active according to the capacities with which we have been endowed, and just in proportion as we endeavour to fulfil the will of our Maker, we are either good or bad. During our entire course, however, we are constantly allured by the world without us, either to good or to evil; some circumstances, some persons, call us to the house of God to worship and to adore; but there are not wanting opportunities nor men that

call us away unto vice and sin. The dangers which thus threaten us, and which, let me add, threaten us from the moment we begin to think, are twofold: first, those produced by circumstances which, as it were, address our senses silently, yet with a language not to be misunderstood; the others may be termed the results of evil communication, which allure the unwary by false pretences, and by colouring the wrong with all the appearances of right. The means of ascertaining what is right are given by the precepts laid down for us in the law, and if ever an opportunity presents itself for disobeying them, if this opportunity be ever so tempting, we must remain firm, because we are certified, that to disobey would be to sin against the declared will of Heaven. So the antidote to sin, in the first instance, is the knowledge of the law, for without this knowledge our very ignorance must misguide us. When evil associates assail us to go along with them on the road to destruction, if they endeavour to counteract the knowledge of the right which we possess by trying to impress upon us its futility, and that there is no necessity to abide by precepts which are confessedly a restraint upon our natural inclinations: we should tell ourselves that the law is not futile, when we discover at every step that obedience to it brings comfort to the doer thereof, and promotes peace and good-will among mankind; and that, if there were no other punishment even save the diseases of the body and the infirmities of the mind, consequent upon the indulgence of the carnal desires, this alone would already be enough to account for the restraints laid upon us by the dictates of the divine law. But, alas! how great

is the number of those who become sinners by opportunity! how great the number of those who listen to evil advice, and who leave the right—pursue the evil —and die before the knowledge of their own wrong has impressed itself upon their minds! It is strange indeed that, seeing so many evils consequent on sin, man could yet be seduced to prefer it to piety; but still the fact is, that sinning is the lot of mankind, and punishment their consequent doom. And because our Father in heaven knows our natures, He does not inflict punishment immediately after the sin has been committed, but withholds, to use the Bible language, "his anger," and waits to see whether the sinner will not repent and return to the practice of the right. Now the question is: "How is a man to do, when he finds that he has been sinning? what should his conduct be to regain the favour of God, which he has lost? how shall he ward off the punishment which so justly threatens him?" A man conscious of having been guilty of pursuing the wrong should, in the first place, cease at once and altogether sinning in the manner he has been accustomed to do. He is not doing what is demanded of him as the first step to repentance, by deferring his reformation from day to day, or by breaking off by degrees. For instance, if he has been in the habit of eating forbidden food three times a day; of violating the Sabbath four times a month; of wronging his fellow-men once a week, it will not be enough for him to begin with reducing the amount of his sinning to once a day, twice a month, or once in two months; no, this is not repenting, this is only to trifle with the Deity, as though we were telling Him, in effect: "Wait, my

Lord God, I cannot now reform all at once, my habits are too much confirmed, I will mend by degrees; I shall indeed be good as soon as my convenience will let me." Indeed? is this repentance? can we thus hope to blind the all-knowing One? Will He believe that our heart actually regrets our conduct, when we still cling to it with an affection which betokens not a sorrow for past conduct? And yet we hear persons speaking, that they now do wrong, because they cannot help themselves, that is to say, their convenience or their worldly interest is served by their misconduct; but at some future time, in a year or two, when they are rich enough, when their health has been too much injured to permit them to participate in farther excesses, O, then they will repent entirely, but in the meantime some slight reformation must suffice. But no, brethren, slight reformation is not the way of repentance; a ruined house may be sustained by a large number of props strongly wedged against the firm ground; but still the ruin is not thereby repaired; just so is it with the sinner; if he does not build up for himself a new building of righteousness in place of the defective one he has been inhabiting in his folly, it is but a ruin he inhabits, and sooner or later, the feeble supporters of the tottering fabric give way, and he, the deluded inhabitant, is crushed by the falling mass when he vainly dreamt himself secure. If therefore a man wishes to repent, he must cease his unrighteousness at the very instant; delays are dangerous; who knows, but before another day is elapsed, his life on earth may be suddenly cut short, and he be thus called hence with all his unforgiven sins on his head! A man may have been deluded,

he may have framed excuses for his wrongs, whilst he committed them; but this should not be any reason for his continuing to act contrary to law, when he discovers the error of his ways. If now he has ceased to do wrong, he should carefully endeavour to repair in some measure, and to the extent of his ability, the wrong he has been doing; he must be particular in his religious conduct, and leave no opportunity unimproved to do just the opposite of his former sinful conduct. And in this active reformation he must disregard any personal inconvenience he may have to encounter; no pecuniary loss must deter him; no fear of ridicule of his former associates must influence him; for if he does not yield his heart entirely to his God, if he esteems the fleeting benefits of riches and of pleasure more than he loves the favour of his Maker; if he fears more the sneers of the ungodly than the frowns of his omnipotent Judge: no reformation has taken place, and his sin is not removed, his recovery has at least not been complete. But after a man has even actually left off the evil of his ways and returned to the practice of the precepts of the law, he should still endeavour to satisfy his conscience by acts of penance. Our wise men have recommended, in consonance with the annunciations of the prophets, the exercise of the following virtues: prayer, fasting, and charity. Prayer we all know to mean an outpouring of the heart to our Maker. But this prayer should be sincere, the outpouring should go the whole length of the sin, and the returning sinner should, in offering up his heart, go over the whole course of his misconduct, paint to himself his wickedness in its proper deformity, and not endeavour

to frame excuses to himself to ease his troubled conscience; but he should state explicitly, without extenuation, the whole of his deeds, and if his mind is troubled, if his feelings are pained by the humiliation he submits to, he may rest assured that he will ultimately be benefitted by the sincerity of his devotion; his feelings will become purified, his mind will become elevated, his beating heart will become calmed, and ever after he will bless the hour in which he revealed himself to himself, and look upon his confessed sins as warnings which will for ever deter him from recurring to his course of vice.

In the same manner as prayer is the expression of feeling in words, so is fasting the expression of contrition in acts. By fasting the sinner reminds himself, and makes an impression on his mind, of the wrongs he has been doing; and if the fasting follows upon a sincere change of heart, the having once done actual penance will always prevent him from falling into the same error, should it ever present itself again to him. It is not that God wishes us to punish ourselves, that our deprivation may be a pleasure to Him; only that our repentance may be done in such a manner as to remain unforgotten by us. Mere sorrow, even anguished feelings may, after a while, fade from the memory; but active repentance, bodily affliction, fasting with a knowledge of our sins, can hardly ever be obliterated from the mind; and besides, while fasting the sinner will revert constantly to the reason of the penance, and in this manner perfect the change of heart, which thought and prayer have begun.

As a third means of propitiating the favour of

Heaven, we are taught to do charity, not merely to dole out alms to beggars, but to bestow our aid on the afflicted, to right the oppressed, succour the poor, and save the tottering brother from falling. If a person having sinned, especially against his fellow-man, and being conscious of his transgression, wishes to show his love of God, revived now in him through repentance: he should prove that he is now willing and anxious to follow his Maker in deeds of benevolence and charity; and in place of his having been hard of heart and unmerciful, he should, being regenerated, be the friend of the poor, the father of the orphan, the protector of the widow, and merciful to those whom the world uses despitefully.—Even if a man should not be blessed with riches, and be thus unable to give away much in charity, then let him give according to his means; and if it be altogether out of his power to give, then let him do personal acts of kindness to all who may stand in need of them; and there are surely always enough that mourn, and over the face of sinful earth sorrow is at all times widely spread. Ay, let him who repents enter the abode of sorrow, let him speak comfort to the prisoner, let him dry the tear of the weeping orphan, let him endeavour to calm the tumultuous heaving of the widow's grief, let him stand by the couch of sickness and wipe away the damps of death from the brow of the departing; let him proclaim the goodness of God to him who is despairing: and he may rest assured that his return to good will be the most acceptable offering, which the sinner can bring to his offended Judge.—As a farther step in a permanent repentance it were well, that a man should

associate with those who fear the Lord, eschew the society of the evil-disposed, avoid temptation; and if his fall is at all owing to ignorance, let him go to the houses where the law of God is taught, even let him, confessing his ignorance, ask advice of those who are better informed than himself, just as a traveller, who has gone astray, asks of those whom he meets, which is the road he ought to go. And even one, to whom the statutes of the Lord are familiar, should again and again revert to them, frequently read and study the life-dispensing word, and upon every act consult what God wills he should do, as a wayfarer looks up to the post which at the crossings of the road marks out the path which leads him to the haven of his destination.—Thus fortified by prayer, by penance, by charity, and by a study of the holy Word, may the repentant sinner freely look upon himself as having regained the way of righteousness, and as being again likely to become deserving of the divine mercy.—And although our transgressions may be manifold, the mercy of God is still greater; if even our sins are countless, the kindness of God is still more beyond measure. So, let no one who has sinned despair of mercy; let him not look upon himself as an outcast from divine favour; but no matter how heavily thy conscience be laden, erring brother! come and call upon thy Father and Creator, and throw thyself for protection and forgiveness before his footstool. Lay open before Him thy heart, and receive the reward meet for thy confidence; for know that we are promised, that even if our sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow through repentance.—God has promised us forgiveness if we seek

it; and it is therefore adding unbelief to our other sins, if we despair of the fulfilment of the promises of mercy. And thus speaks the prophet Hosea in his address to Israel:

שובה ישראל עד ה׳ אלהיך כי כשלת בעונך : קחו
עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה׳ אמרו אליו כל תשא עון
וקח טוב ונשלמה פרים שפתינו : הושע יד׳ ב׳–ג׳ :

"Return, O Israel, unto the Lord thy God, although degraded through thy iniquity. Take but prayers with you, and return to the Lord! Speak to Him, O Thou, who forgivest all iniquities, receive graciously our doing good, and with our lips we will repay the steers of sacrifice." xiv. 2–3.

Here we are told the consoling truths, that repentance will be availing though the iniquities he has been committing have brought man to stumbling; and that no sacrifices are absolutely necessary but an amendment of the heart, a return to good, and an outpouring of a contrite spirit. If sacrifices were alone capable of affording atonement, there could at this moment no atonement be made for captive Israel; for we have no temple, no priest, no sacrifices. But our Father, when He cast us out from our land, did not by punishing us cast us off from his grace; and He is yet our God, although we no longer can lead the steer of sacrifice to his holy courts to atone for the transgressions of our people on the Day of Atonement. But when we assemble in the minor temples in all places of our habitation, and institute there a rigid inquiry into our conduct, condemn sincerely whatever wrong we find, lay our case before God, and come away amended in deeds, and resolved

in mind to be obedient henceforward: we are promised, that God will heal the wounds of our apostacy, love us again in his favour, and take away his anger from us. Like the blessed dew He will be to us, we shall bloom like the rose, and take root like the forests on Lebanon. These are the promises of the Lord, and we may, therefore, freely give up ourselves to the guidance of our better feelings, which constantly draw us to the righteous way. And what hinders us? Interest, in the first place; because we might lose worldly gain, if we are religious. Next, pride; we cannot confess to the world that we have been in the wrong in our former doings. Lastly, false shame; we cannot bear to lose the name of an independent spirit, of a deep philosophical thinker, which had been given to us for our former contempt of all religious duties. Superadd to these chief causes in some the ruling moral supineness in others, that inactivity which rather yields to the evil passions than grapples with them, and you have the whole amount of obstacles to a thorough reformation. And are these so very formidable? Let us view worldly interest in its strongest points, admit that a violation of the law can produce a rich harvest of wealth and renown: and still a man must be very shortsighted if he cannot see that these ends never can satisfy all the cravings of the mind. And let a person's riches be ever so great, either he is compelled to leave them, or he is not permitted to enjoy them even during his whole life; and the man of power does not repose on a bed of roses; envy assails him; hatred pursues all his steps, and deadly revenge lays schemes against his life. Add to which, that no man dies with half

of his desires gratified, and then answer for yourselves, whether there is aught in riches or in power so very tempting, as to sacrifice the everlasting interest of the immortal soul to their acquisition or retention.

Pride, I said, will not suffer us to confess ourselves to have been in the wrong; but though we can carry a bold front before the world all the days of our life, it is impossible to escape the notice of God; and consequently it were better at once to mortify our pride by an acknowledgment of our error, than to incur the inevitable tendency of an unreformed life of sin. Farther, we should reflect, that but the first beginning will be painful; and if we have once conquered our pride, have once acknowledged our wrong, the subsequent religious conduct of our reformed life will never pain our self-love any more; on the contrary we will look back with satisfaction upon the hour when we humbled our pride, when we yielded our spirit to the divine inspiration of repentance.

False shame also is an obstacle, as has been said; a man has had a name of an independent philosopher, and if he should yield submission to religion, he of course loses this envied distinction. But what does he lose thereby? he is praised for the possession of a positively injurious quality, a blind overweening confidence in his own wisdom, and by repentance he yields his judgment to God's guidance; and thus though he humbles himself, and confesses that his own knowledge has not been a just guide, he thereby acquires a safer conductor, for the profession of the holy law will enable him the better to lead a life of piety, humility, and benevolence; and he will earn in

place of the admiration of the idle, the worthless and the ignorant, the satisfaction of the Searcher of hearts, the Knower of all secrets, the Judge of all flesh, of Him who punisheth iniquities and rewardeth obedience!

And as to moral supineness preventing reformation, the sinner should be reminded that, as with pride, the first effort alone is really painful, and by degrees, even the most cherished debaucheries and extravagancies will become absolutely nauseous; and when once a person has confirmed himself in the practice of morality, moderation, and religious observances, no one more than himself will be surprised at his blindness and folly in having been so long the slave of vice and infidelity. Let us, therefore, join heart and hand, and resolve firmly to return to the Lord, and let each leave off the wrong that is in his hand, and endeavour to repair, as much as possible, the evil he has committed. "Let," as Isaiah says, "the sinner leave his way, and the man of wrong his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He is great in pardoning." Thus has the Lord promised; and we the children of the first believers; we the descendants of Abraham, who left his father's house by command of God—of Isaac, who was willing to die a sacrifice on the altar of the Lord—of Jacob, who even among idolaters and in servitude never gave up his innocence; we the inheritors of the everlasting covenant, —surely we ought not to disbelieve, to hesitate, to despair of mercy; and although stumbling through our sins, let each recurrence of the season of repentance impress us with the necessity of repenting and

returning to the way of righteousness. And O! may our eyes live to see the day, when all Israel, returning to the God of their fathers in truth and righteousness, will exclaim again as in days of old: "The Lord is the God! the Lord is the God!" Such a Day of Atonement will indeed be an acceptable day to our almighty Father, and a day of glory and happiness to Israel; and well may he who confides in the Lord say at its close: " I am now willing to die, since over the regenerated earth again walks peace, and in the habitations of men again dwell piety and the grace of the Lord."

Father of mercy! grant our portion in life and happiness, and shield us from famine, from war, and from pestilence; and let the year which has just begun be to us and all Israel a year of joy, of peace, of light in the law, of health, of contentment; a year in which thy people may not need the assistance of each other or of a foreign people; a year in which Thou mayest restrain mortality, pestilence, and destruction from us; and upon the people, amongst whom we live, bestow peace, and plenty, and let their hearts be inclined to mercy towards us and all Israel our brethren. And O, Protector of Jacob! arrest the arm of persecution, stay the evil advice which our enemies give, baffle their thoughts, and render as naught their intentions, and show to all nations of the earth, that Thou art our Father and Redeemer; and let it be thy will, God of our fathers! to let thy glory again dwell among us, and send thy anointed to gather us from all portions of the earth. Amen.

Tishry 7th.
October 10th. } 5595.

DISCOURSE XXXVI.

THE JEWISH FAITH.

To the God, who is alone everlasting and unchanging, and who keeps his promises unto the latest generations, be praise, and glory, and adoration from all the creatures that He has created in his mercy and kindness. Amen.

Brethren!

The religion, by the bestowal of which, God has favoured us, demands of us two things: namely, believing or faith, and deeds, or in other words active religion. Without a motive for action we do not act, and consequently without a motive for religious conduct we would certainly not be religious; and therefore if we wish to be religious, or to speak more properly, if we are really anxious to secure that great share of happiness which flows from an obedience to the divine law, we must fortify ourselves previously by an acquisition of such feelings as best conduce to such a desirable consummation; or what is the same, we must endeavour to grow in faith, and strengthen thereby the growth of good deeds; for faith alone can be the producer of outward actions, if these actions are to have the least claim to sincerity. It is true, any one can practise the same line of conduct pursued by another, without being in the least imbued with the feelings of the latter; he may accommodate himself

to an outward conformity from interest, from fear, or even because he would as leave do one thing as the other. But it must be evident to even the most charitable judge of human infirmities, or the most indulgent palliator of human faults, that the conduct of such a hypocrite, coward, or indifferent one, cannot in any degree be considered as deserving of the smallest degree of approbation; because there is wanting that inward impress of hallowed thought which can evidently alone stamp it as possessing value and real usefulness. For, let the hypocrite be removed from observation, will his conduct not change? Let the fearful coward be beyond the fear which spellbound him, where will his conformity have flown to? Let him, who amongst faithful Israelites is an Israelite in his outward practice, be placed among those acting otherwise, will his indifference not induce him to agree with his present associates? These questions answer themselves, and unfortunately examples are not wanting to prove that they are not based upon mere supposition. It remains therefore for us to find out precisely those principles which, when cherished, will produce amongst all men a uniform course of action, as far as uniformity can be reached by so many thinking beings, who are all placed in different circumstances, and all labouring under the disadvantage of a want of uniformity of instruction and intellectual endowments. —To premise: we all, every human being, even the suicide, constantly strive by every act, unless we are at the moment under absolute constraint, to improve our happiness, or to avoid an intolerable evil, which two motives, if properly considered, will be found to be identically the same; for a removal of any evil, let

it be ever so small, is an absolute increase of happiness to an equal amount. Since now the pursuit of happiness is our ruling motive, and since every one thinks himself properly in pursuit thereof: it is evident, since we see men differing so widely in their conduct, and since the two extremes of a thing cannot be the same, that it is owing to the want of proper information or correct training, which training is in most instances, if not in all, the parent of information. And although each one thinks himself acting correctly and in a manner which will best secure happiness to himself and those dependent upon him: still it is evident that misery is the result of many a one's conduct, misery to himself and misery to others. Now it is not to be denied, that there is hardly any line of conduct, or we may at once admit for argument's sake, that there is none, which will exempt us from evil; but it is equally true, that many ways there are which will be more useful than others; and as believers in an overruling Providence we must say, that upon the way of righteousness there is, when properly viewed, no evil whatever; as even the apparent ills are always leading to some beneficial ending. It is therefore at once incumbent on us to seek this way which will lead to so glorious a result, and not alone this, but to acquire such feelings, to the exclusion of all others, as will prevent us from ever leaving this good way, when once we have entered upon it. And let it be observed, that it is mainly for our own sakes that we should do so; for by the accruing happiness no one will be more benefitted than ourselves.

As following from what has been said we will now maintain, that a belief and an acquiescence in re-

ligious doctrines, clearly defined and well understood, will hold the mind devoted to religious conduct, and, what is the same, will insure happiness.—Some persons may object to creeds, as demanding an acquiescence in things not understood, in doctrines not consonant with reason; but such an opinion is entirely erroneous, and shows an ignorance of those doctrines which are attempted to be undervalued.—We will proceed now to the consideration of the doctrines of faith, which are the foundation of the religion which we profess. In the first place we have, as the foundation of all religion, the belief in the existence of a God; secondly, we are to acknowledge that this God made known to mankind his will for their guidance; and thirdly, that we are accountable to this God for a dereliction from, or to be rewarded by Him for an obedience to, his will as declared to us. I have said that the foundation of our religion is entirely consonant with reason, and that besides its doctrines can be clearly defined and readily understood; it will therefore be now necessary to elucidate this assertion entirely to your satisfaction, although this may by some be considered as hardly necessary, where the proof is so obvious.—The first fundamental principle says: "There is a God." Yes, there is a God! all nature cries; there is a God! who made all that our eyes behold and that our thoughts can conceive; there is a God! the angels exclaim, who is far removed beyond the ken of the purest, and greatest, and wisest of all existing beings; there is a God! the saints respond, who is blessed beyond all conception, who is good beyond the reach of the imagination. If we but cast our eye upward to the

starry firmament, and behold the myriads of suns sending down their beaming light upon us; when we see the quiet moon winging its circuit round our planet, when we regard the bright light of the glorious sun, which refreshes and quickens all here below: we must acknowledge that one, great, and mighty Architect made them all, and appointed to each and all the courses they are to pursue, till their task is finished, till their end has come; when they, the great monuments of God's wisdom, too, may pass away, and thus show, that He alone endures for ever.—Go abroad from your dwellings, and gaze on the fields clad in the spring-time with the mantle of green; see the trees putting on their leafy garment; and see in summer the golden fruit ripen in the wide-spread plain; and in autumn the clustering grapes suspended from the vine; and in winter the dazzling snow shrouding the face of the land to render again fruitful the exhausted soil: and then say, whether or not there is one wise Creator that organized all so beautifully and for so benign a purpose. And look upon the streamlets, how they bubble forth from the flinty rock or the marshy fen, how they swell and unite into a mighty stream, till the heaving ocean receives the lengthened and majestic river; and that highway of nations itself, the salty and unfathomable deep which surrounds the earth—and gainsay, if you can, that our Father above breaks the rock with his potent might and bids the waters flow, and gathers the streams, bears onward the waves, and piles as it were in the hollow of his hand the restless, swelling ocean's flood, and sets to it a limit, saying: "Thus far only shalt thou come!"—

And who is it, O proud mortal! who causes the invisible wind to blow; who is it that does bring up clouds from the ends of the earth; at whose bidding does the thunder roll, and at whose command does the lightning flash; at whose nod does the earth-globe tremble? unless it be our almighty God?—And say, who provides food for thee; who is so bountiful to all that have life; who so kindly sustains all, if it is not He who formed all that exists?—And reflect upon thyself, and contemplate the wonderful construction of the animal frame, gifted with strength and beauty; and thy sentient soul, she, that feels, and thinks, and plans, and resolves, and longs for happiness: and then answer, if not an all-wise Power has organized thee and all else around thee!—And thus it is, whether we engage in the study of the heavenly spheres; the earth on which we live; the beasts of the field, the fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea; or if we, leaving all outward nature, revert to ourselves: we will ever arrive at the point to which all contemplation must at length lead—the existence of a Creator, the Cause of causes, the Power of powers!—And where is that gloomy fanatic, that lost son of humanity, who, because he cannot conceive *what God is*, doubts his existence? How miserable must he be, to find himself in this world surrounded by dangers, encircled by misfortunes, which he himself cannot remove, and which he believes there is no being capable of removing. And let him pursue his own reflections, does he at length not come to a proposition which is in effect an acknowledgment of a Creator, though he does not wish to confess it in so many words? Ask him, what he

considers the origin of things to be: and he must say, to solve the mystery of existence, that there existed matter, and that through an arrangement which he cannot explain (mind brethren, the atheist is not in the least nearer to knowledge because of his reckless denial) things were so ordered, fortuitously of course, as we find them. Still is it not evident to every one, except to the wilfully blind, that this fortuitous Arranger, but which in effect must be an intelligent mind, is actually a God, a Creator, and, what follows of itself, a Preserver? The truth is, there is nothing more absurd than the denial of a Creator; for there is no conceivable theory of explaining the existence of any organization without Him. And as said, though we confess, that we know not what God is, how He exists, when his existence began: still we have a starting-point upon which to rest our system; we adore Him, who is inconceivable, we submit to Him, who is removed from our research, and in our affliction we call upon Him, who, having made all according to his will, can order things, can arrange his creation as may be pleasing to Him, at all times, at all seasons, and under all circumstances. And he who denies this, is he any wiser than we? Are his ideas of his own origin any more satisfactory? Is his system, to use the cant phrase, a phrase much abused by the ignorant or would-be-wise, is his system, I meant to say, more philosophical, or does it not lead, as briefly exhibited already, to the most monstrous absurdities and contradictions?—No brethren, atheism is unreasonable; and there is no reason whatever for a thinking man to adopt the horrible system of absurd-

ities which it must produce. I will not now enter upon the practical evils of social disorganization which must follow in its train; since my present object is merely to show its folly and unsoundness, and to exhibit briefly the beauty and consistency of the first tenet of our holy law, which demands: "There is a God."

This God, who is so infinite, so immeasurably great, has thought fit at different times to reveal himself to certain persons of both sexes, and of various nations, to make known through them the doctrines and laws, by which He wished mankind should be governed, without however depriving any one of the free will to adopt or reject these precepts; or, to express myself more distinctly, laws were given, by obeying which we should be acting according to the will of our Maker, and by doing so deserve his favour, but while the way was pointed out to us, no actual compulsion was laid upon our inclinations; for though instructed, we can, if our wayward fancy should incline us, act in such a manner as though no law had been given, and conduct ourselves contrary to, and in defiance of, the will of God.—It is not necessary at this moment to prove the reasonableness of this principle, since I have so often before to-day called your attention to the subject, and I trust the little I have advanced has been more than enough to remove doubts, at least so far as to answer objections. To me indeed it appears superfluous to argue the subject; for God's ability to communicate his will, if He is so disposed, cannot be doubted; and He who provides for the wants of the animalcules, a million of which will barely cover the end of this finger,

could, and must have given to man, the crown of his creation, a guide to his mind, a prop to his soul which should be a shield against evil, and a guardian that should point out and lead on to everlasting happiness.—A few words at this time only will I add with reference to the record of the divine revelation which we now possess, and which, as you well know, it is our duty to obey. In the first place a great injury is done to religion by the ignorant looking upon it as the work of Moses. But how often must it be repeated, that Moses was not the author of a single precept, but that he acted merely as the messenger whom the Israelites themselves had selected to communicate to them whatever God might reveal to him for their guidance? If it were indeed that the Mosaic law had no better foundation than human ingenuity, then for a certainty would it be unreasonable to demand implicit obedience to its tenets, any more than to the works of Solon, of Confucius, of Matthew, or of Paul. But if we look upon it according to its real merits, if we behold in it the workings and the immediate inspiration of the Deity: then indeed the case is entirely altered, and the enactments it contains in this case demand, not alone our attention, but an entire and confiding obedience. And do not the various statutes, independently of every other consideration, deserve, from their extreme utility, all that the advocates of their sanctity ask for them? What law does so well secure the liberty of the citizen, the administration of justice, the righting of the oppressed, or watches with so much solicitude over the security of the helpless female, the bereaved orphan, the unprotected stranger—even the slave who,

to escape from his tyrant's oppression, comes to seek the protection and security of the divine code? Come, and let us take a few of the laws; for instance: "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;" doubtless, he who luxuriously, in the arms of riches, in the possession of plenty, idles away his whole life, may not feel the force, the benignity, the extreme wisdom, let me add, of the commandment; but go amongst the multitude, who, true to the curse pronounced against the sinning progenitor of our race, "earn their bread by the sweat of their face," go and see how gladly they celebrate the weekly Sabbath; how joyfully they welcome the heavenly bride; go and see them at their holy day repast, with how much religious zest the viands of the body even are enjoyed, because it is the Lord's holy and blessed day: and then say, if you can, whether such a spread of hilarity among so many intelligent creatures, who, though poor, are as much entitled to repose and enjoyment as the irresponsible autocrat of a mighty kingdom, is not a work for the ordination of which the loving Father of his creatures might not employ himself, consonantly with his dignity and wisdom? In short, all who labour, be they farmers, mechanics, teachers, servants, judges, or scholars, all must equally be rejoiced when weekly their toils are suspended, when they are left to acquire new strength for renewed exertion.—"Honour thy father and mother" is another precept; this too may not be palatable to the idle and vicious offspring who, when their father grows old, when their mother becomes helpless, may think that the aged ones have lived long enough, and may even deem it a mercy to terminate by one blow the sufferings of decrepit old

age. But were the parents to think so, and cast off the puling, helpless, almost unconscious, tender nursling, where would these same vain, arrogant ones be? what but a mother's care watched over the infant, called forth its nascent intelligence by maternal endearment, hung with hope and fear over the couch of early suffering? who but a father would toil from early dawn till the hour of eve, under the rays of the scorching sun, amidst the war of elements, in the piercing blast of a winter's storm, to provide bread for the infants whom it is his joy to call his own offspring, the children of his beloved wife? And these are the beings whom unbelief would forsake, when they in turn become helpless, when they are helpless perhaps through fatigue endured, through expenses incurred for those ingrates who now anxiously hope for their dissolution?—Again says the law: "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" "there shall be no incest among you." And how eloquently do these precepts appeal to our feelings. Among heathen nations, and even among the enlightened people of the present day, the female was or is yet looked upon as an instrument of pleasure; and when once contaminated by the touch of vice, she is cast abroad as something too unclean to come near us, as one abandoned to merited opprobrium, nay, as one placed beyond the pale of compassion. And it is to protect the thoughtless and perhaps too confiding woman that these statutes were enacted; to banish from the heart of society that portion which, as an eloquent female writer observes, is at once the victim and parent of vice; and therefore we have so many details in the Pentateuch which are to regulate the judges of Israel in their

decision in all cases of incest and immorality. This is the law in which we are to have faith, and against which the voice of unbelief ought not to be raised; and it is especially horrible to hear females uttering aught of disrespect against the holy tenets; and to me it seems, that although in man infidelity is unpardonable, it appears doubly offensive and unnatural in woman, whose very estimation, and rank, and welfare in society are chiefly based upon the benign code which we profess. Were I to follow my own inclination, were I as eloquent as the subject deserves, I would for hours descant upon the theme, and not leave it till all had acknowledged themselves convinced; but my tongue is feeble, my mind insufficient to reach the end; and you, sons and daughters of Israel who hear me, surely need not for my admonition to exhort you to uphold that which your own hearts, your own convictions, must tell you, is beyond price invaluable.

We now come at length to the last fundamental principle of our religion, which teaches: "God will reward the righteous according to his righteousness, and give to the wicked according to his wickedness." A very few words will suffice in explanation. God, the Creator of all, has made his will known to mankind for their government; but, as said already, He gave them a free will to obey or not to obey. At the same time He declared, that by obedience life would be obtained, but the consequence of disobedience should be death. Now, as the conditions are known, and as God is all-powerful, it follows that obedience or righteousness will meet with reward or life; disobedience or wickedness with punishment or death.

And as the Creator's power is not limited by time or space, reward or punishment will be the certain consequence of our conduct, either in this life, or after death when we shall have entered a new state of existence. And thus says David: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, and whither from thy face shall I fly? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there, and if I should lie down in the abyss, I should find Thee."—These now are the feelings which we should cultivate to be sincerely religious; we must believe in the existence of God, in the promulgation of his law, and in the certainty of reward and punishment. A faith like this, in principles perfectly reasonable and clearly understood, must step by step promote a holiness of heart, a readiness to acquiesce in, and to exercise the duties of religion. A faith like this may be properly termed a justifying faith, because it preserves the mind pure and undefiled from the access of sin and corruption; and if even sin should have already been committed, it will tend to clear away the impurities, the dross of wickedness, and produce a cleansing of the spirit and a regeneration of the inward man, and render him a just and worthy servant of the Lord.—As a consequence of being in possession of faith, a man will be imbued with resignation to God's decrees and a sincere belief, that all that happens is from a good and wise purpose; farther, it will cause a filial reliance upon God's promises, and prevent the righteous from ever despairing, although he see not the fruits he might hope for from his well-directed conscientious exertions.—Such a faith it was which animated our glorious ancestor Abraham. He stood forth amidst the heathens, a shining light amidst the

darkness, and proclaimed the unity and eternity of the Creator of all. Abraham had been promised that in him all families of the earth should be blessed, and that he should be the progenitor of a numerous nation. Time had passed on, and the Patriarch had reached perhaps his eighty-fifth year, and still he was childless. But now he was assured, that despite of unfavourable appearances the promise of a numerous progeny should eventually be fulfilled. And says the text: "And He led him out abroad, and said, Look up, I pray thee, heavenward, and count the stars, if thou canst count them; and He said to him, Thus shall be thy descendants." And continues the sacred writer:

והאמין בה׳ ויחשבה לו צדקה׃ בר׳ טו׳ ו׳׃

"And he believed in the Lord, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." Gen. xv. 6.

Abraham thus, as we see, believed firmly, confidingly in God and his promises, undismayed by the improbability of the fulfilment, and we have it here recorded that this faith was reckoned as an exertion of righteousness; and this shows us that thoughts as well as actions are meritorious in the sight of the Searcher of hearts.—And the promise so solemnly given and so truly believed has been fulfilled, and we are here this day the witnesses of the truth of prophecy and of the unwavering righteousness of God; for we are the children of Abraham, the fulfilment of a long-cherished promise. And should we waver? should we hesitate? should we doubt? No, let it be our constant endeavour to fortify ourselves in faith,

and to increase in righteousness, and let it never be laid to our charge that we have basely dishonoured the name of Abraham, the friend and adorer of God!

May we all live in righteousness and holiness, and may the workings of faith, proved by deeds of devotion to God's holy law, cause our prayers to be acceptable before the throne of Him, who lives for ever, and whose glory filleth all the universe! Amen.

Heshvan 12th. } 5595.
Novemb. 14th. }

DISCOURSE XXXVII.

THE PUNISHMENT OF PHARAOH.

O MYSTERIOUS and omnipotent Being! who art so far exalted and removed beyond our mortal research, fill our hearts with meekness and devotion, that we may implicitly resign ourselves to thy guidance, and submit with patience to thy all-wise dispensations. And O our Father! if Thou sendest sufferings to our hearts, if Thou leadest us through the valley of the shadow of death, because of our transgressions: O do Thou lead us, do Thou support us with the right hand of thy salvation, and guide us safe and unscathed, and cause our faith in thy goodness to remain undiminished; and let us be instructed by thyself, that the pains which Thou dispensest are sent to cement the stronger the ties, by which Thou drawest

thy children closer unto thyself; and that it is by tribulations only that our sins are washed off, and we are rendered again pure and unspotted, and worthy of thy unending grace and favour. Amen.

Brethren!

Often indeed it happens that we humble, uninstructed, and shortsighted mortals presume to call in question the decrees of the Deity, and as it were the creature arraigns, and sits in judgment over, the all-wise and blessed Creator. Vain presumption! sinful audacity! how can we, the worms of the earth, whose being is limited to the shortest span, whose mind is incarcerated within a mortal habiliment, whose ideas are weakened, whose perception is blunted by sorrow, by sickness, by pains, by passions—how can we —how dare we—mistrust the wisdom, the goodness, the infallibility of Him, who is "old of days," whose mind is unsearchable, to whom every thing is known, to whom all existing things are as naught, who is never disturbed, never influenced by sorrow or suffering, by passion, or by ignorance? who, when He judges, judges with mercy? who, when He punishes, sendeth the balm before the wound is struck?—And what are to Him the earth and all that fills it, the sea and the mighty monsters of the deep, the birds that seek the expanse of firmament,—when all that is in being is derived from Him alone,—when all that breatheth is to Him accountable?—And still, despite of the immeasurable difference which divides us from Him, our God, we are yet weak enough, vain enough, presumptuous enough to judge Him by the weak, imperfect standard of our intellect And in reading the

records of revelation we are very often led away by our ignorance to impugn the justice of God in his actions towards men, as though He could view things with human feelings! It must strike you as self-evident from the very nature of things, that such a mode of reasoning, which would apply to God's actions the standard of humanity, must be erroneous, and lead to pernicious conclusions, in as far as it would weaken our attachment to the doctrines of the Bible, and render us lukewarm in the execution of its precepts. It is, therefore, necessary, that our studies and our researches, as well as our conduct, should be characterized by a deep humility and by a sincere single-heartedness, which should induce us to approach the word of God with fearfulness and with a weak reliance upon our own wisdom, and with a perfect consciousness, that the divine Author of our legislation could not err in his decrees any more, than in the line of conduct He chose to pursue to our ancestors and to the nations whose history is interwoven with our own. If we approach the investigation of the Scriptures in this spirit, we shall hesitate in our judgment upon points which at first sight may appear unreasonable; and we will, as a necessary consequence of our perfect reliance upon the truth of what is written down in the holy Text, shape our conduct in strict conformity to its behests, as by so doing we follow the persuasions of unwavering, uncorrupted, and unchanging truth. But should we on the other hand approach the investigation of the Bible-text with a determination to use our own wisdom as a sure and safe guide, and set to work to accommodate the events of history to our views of right

and wrong, add to which, that our understanding of the Text may at the same time be in some degree defective and our acquaintance with history and the operations of the human heart deficient: it is absolutely necessary, that we will end by cavilling at the justice of God, and as a natural consequence, our veneration for the words and precepts of Scripture will become weakened; and this again will lead to unbelief, and unbelief to irreligion and immorality, and these again to loss of happiness which is so abundantly to be found in the practice of the commands of the holy law.—Humility, however, in an investigation so important, not alone to ourselves, as individuals, but to all in any degree connected with us, will teach us, even if the subject-matter is capable of no explanation whatever, that we must submit, where there is no means of arriving at knowledge, and that the Almighty is as incapable of injustice, as his wisdom is incapable of error. Besides, it must be considered that if to-day, with the information in our power, any thing or event is inexplicable to us, the case may be altogether different to-morrow, if our sphere of knowledge be then more extended. So far, therefore, is an acquiescence in religious truths no evidence of credulity and ignorance, that it may be viewed as proof of a purer than worldly wisdom; since it may be based upon a knowledge of our capacity of arriving daily and hourly at more information, and the assurance that after a long life spent in the pursuit of knowledge, there is an immense field yet unexplored. And thus it happened with one of the most remarkable men in a preceding age, whose discoveries in philosophy have opened a new career to

subsequent discoverers, and whose virtue was equal to his learning. At the close of a long life, when he might be supposed to have done as much as lay in human power, he is said to have spoken of his own attainments: "I am but like one who has been picking up shells on the borders of the great ocean of truth." This good man, whose candid confession thus feelingly spoken may well tend to strike with shame the presumptuous scoffer and the vain-glorious egotist, was not one of our brethren; yet we must respect virtue wherever we find it; and wherever we see the stamp of the similitude to our heavenly Father impressed on a man, thither too should our esteem and our love be directed.

But I am leaving the subject I intended presenting to your reflection to-day; and not to exhaust your patience, I find it necessary to curb the indignant feelings which ever rise within me when I hear, or fancy I hear, the wisdom, the righteousness, or the goodness of God called into question, be this proceeding from ignorance, from unbelief, or from wickedness; since I conceive either motive extremely prejudicial to, if not altogether subversive of, true piety.—Of all objections raised against the authenticity of the Mosaic records, none have afforded more fruitful themes of declamation to infidels or those who blindly follow their silly outpourings, than the conduct of the Deity with regard to the tyrannical king of Egypt, who oppressed so cruelly our ancestors for many years, keeping them under the yoke of the most horrid slavery, and dooming the name of Jacob to extermination by slaying every male child as soon as it entered the world. Let us, therefore, calmly investigate the text,

and see whether it contains aught disconsonant with the rule of everlasting justice. We read in Exodus x. 1–2:

ויאמר ה׳ אל משה בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי
את לבו ואת לב עבדיו למען שתי אתתי אלה בקרבו:
ולמען תספר באזני בנך ובן בנך את אשר התעללתי
במצרים ואת אתתי אשר שמתי בם וידעתם כי אני ה׳:
שמות י׳ א׳–ב׳:

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh; for I have caused to be heavy his heart and the heart of his servants, for the sake that I might do these my signs in the midst of them. And for the sake that thou mightest tell in the ears of thy son and of thy son's son that which I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have displayed among them; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

As I have just said, against this passage it is alleged, that it is unbecoming in God to harden Pharaoh's heart, and then punish him for disobedience. This I believe is the substance of the charge as far as I have ever understood it, and stating it in this form, I have given it, I may safely aver, its strongest bearing. I will not in refuting it overwhelm you with an appeal to the inscrutable wisdom of God, to his unwavering justice, although this would at once convince us that radically there can be nothing wrong in the passage; for we may freely say, that God knew better than we can know, how far He was justifiable to proceed towards Pharaoh without our even daring to presume to impugn his justice. This indeed would be enough to the humble believer, who always places the Lord before his eyes, and whose heart is entire with his God. But there are many whose faith is not

well founded, who are vain-glorious, wise in their own eyes, who call perhaps, in their ignorance, the light darkness, and the darkness light; and who still, whilst always cavilling and fault-finding, consider themselves as Israelites in deeds and in mind; and for the sake of such, if any there be among my hearers, and for the sake of those who have no confidence in revelation, we will endeavour briefly to give convincing answers to their doubts and objections.—It is a fact well authenticated, perhaps by the experience of every human being, that the habit of doing any thing lessens its importance in the eyes of him who does it. Be this habit one of virtue or of vice, it matters not; for by habit vice becomes as necessary to man as the exercise of virtue. Ask the drunkard, why he does not leave off resorting to the intoxicating draught; the gambler, why he does not shun the gaming table; the debauchee, why he forsakes not the haunts of the ungodly; the man of quarrel and of violence, why he constitutes himself the bane and curse of his friends: and they will, one and all, tell you that habit has made sin so necessary to them, that it is in vain they strive against it. This, it is true, is not the case, because any habit can be corrected; still it elucidates the difficulty under which sin places her votary, and it proves the greatness of the tyranny which the spirit of ungodliness exercises over his devoted slaves. If now, as of course He must, the Almighty visits the sinner with retribution, one warning will seldom effect any good; the heart loves its perverseness, and it may not, nay it will not, distinguish the handwriting on the wall, as it were, which terrified amidst his unholy revels the wicked Babylonian monarch. It is

not, believe me, Belshazzar alone that revels till the clutch of death is on his throat; would to God it were so! but alas, millions there are who sport in sin, weening the evil day will never come, and they fancy themselves placed beyond the reach of retribution. Their power is great, their riches are extensive, their fair fame stands unimpeached in the eyes of the world, they are beloved by their kindred, their health is robust, and their age is yet of the spring of life, what have they to fear? let others tremble who are less favoured; let those worship who are needy; let those practise abstinence who cannot help themselves; let those court popularity by benevolence and good deeds who are not popular already: what indeed have they, the great and favoured, to look for or to fear? Let now, as said, a small warning be sent to them; let them, for instance, be thrown on the couch of sickness: do you believe that they will repent of their errors? or rather will they not regard disease as inherent to man, as a thing not worth noticing? Or let the Almighty send his angel of death in the midst of their dwelling, let him strike down the stem from which they have sprung; let him pluck away the tender shoot which is to transmit their name to after-ages; let him take away the partners of their earthly journey, whom God has assigned to them as their associates on life's weary pilgrimage: will they repent? no; death, they will say, is humanity's lot, and the warning of God is forgotten.—Let us apply these facts to the case of Pharaoh. The Egyptians in a former age had received with becoming hospitality the father and brothers of their great benefactor Joseph, who had saved the country from a desolating

famine through his Heaven-inspired wisdom. Another generation succeeding had overlooked what Joseph had done; and as the Israelites had in the meantime grown numerous and powerful, so that the land had become full of them, they inspired with unfounded fear the nation among which they dwelt. The Israelites had a worship differing from the Egyptians, and the worshippers of *Adonai Shaddai*, the Lord Almighty, found no sympathy with the followers of the personified sun and moon, the idols Osiris and Isis. Fear begat jealousy, and by degrees slavery was decreed the doom of the hated race, and the Israelites were compelled to "build treasury-towns for Pharaoh, even Peetom and Rangmesses. And they embittered their lives with hard labour, in clay and in bricks and in all manner of work in the field, and all their work, in which they made them work slavishly." And as if to add insult to injury, the people who were oppressed, were soon viewed as inferiors, and Jacob's blood was looked upon as contaminating to the children of Ham. Yet the increase of the enslaved people was not checked, and "the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied, and the more they spread out." And now murder was to be added; first Hebrew women were ordered to be the executioners of a tyrant's will; but the noble courage of female heroism disdained to purchase kingly favour at the expense of the wrath of God. And when he found himself foiled, and his mandates laughed to scorn, he commanded truer executioners to do his work, and every Egyptian was empowered to throw every Hebrew boy, as soon as born, into the Nile. Does not such conduct deserve punish-

ment? Should the people go unrewarded with condign visitation who so faithfully seconded an ungodly and murderous mandate?—And when even our Moses was saved only through an overruling Providence, when the child of the chief of his tribe was not safe within the mother's fond embrace: where, I ask you, could there be safety? And even after the death of this oppressor, the burden of the Israelites was not much if any diminished; and when at length Moses had reached his eightieth year, the merciful One determined that now the cup of misery of his people was full; and that the moment had arrived when they should be led forth from bondage; and that the probation by which they should be educated in the fear and the knowledge of the Lord had been completely endured. Moses was therefore despatched to Egypt's king in the name of the eternal Lord, the God of Israel, to demand the release of the captives. The idolater knew not the Deity in whose name the prophet spoke, his priests, his conjurors, his deceivers had not taught him to fear the unseen, the incomprehensible, the not-to-be-figured God; and is it likely that he should obey a mandate of so monstrous a nature without some striking, some convincing, proof? A proof of Moses's truth he required. Aaron, by his brother's command, threw down his staff, and it became a serpent; but then the magicians pretended to do the like by their mysterious arts, "and Pharaoh's heart was hard (or strong)," to use the Bible phrase, "and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had spoken," when He said: "And I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, and not even with a strong hand; and I will stretch out my hand, and

I will smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof, and after that he will dismiss you." Here then we have the plan of God at once displayed. Moses was to be sent with the requisition for the liberation of the captives; but God, knowing the heart of man, told Moses for his guidance, and to inspire him with confidence, that upon his first demand, upon the first punishments even, nothing but contumely was to be looked for; and thus speaks the verse: "And I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, and not even with a strong hand." This assurance was truly necessary to be given; for even the messenger himself, true to human weakness, despaired of success, when his first attempt to benefit his brethren brought down upon them increased oppression and hardship.—And when Moses spoke of retribution he said: "That the first-born should be slain as a consequence of non-compliance by Pharaoh." While therefore the death of these had not taken place, the prophet would have been looked upon as a deceiver; it was therefore so ordained, if we take the words "hardening of heart" as they are commonly understood, that Pharaoh should not finally relent till the prediction had been fulfilled.—Another motive for this conduct of God is given in the text I have taken: "That I might do these my signs in the midst of them; and for the sake that thou (the Israelites) mightest tell what I have done in Egypt —and you shall know that I am the Lord,"—that is to say, that He the Lord is all-powerful and irresistible, and that his will must be obeyed, no matter if a man were ten times to oppose himself to the warnings given him, if ten times he were to resist the evi-

dence of punishment, that his conduct is hateful in the sight of Heaven. And can any one say, that Pharaoh and his people did not deserve the punishments, the more so, as they did last but a short time? But despite of the brevity of their duration, they were eminently calculated to strike terror from the severity of their effects, and to fill the heart with admiration of God's power from the suddenness and awfulness, and wonderfulness with which they were sent. There is every reason to believe that the Israelites also had, in the lapse of time, become greatly like their masters, addicted to idolatry, and that the pure worship, which Abraham had proclaimed, had by degrees faded also from their memory. What better method could God now employ to reinstruct them of his greatness and power, than by punishing signally, and in different manners, those that ruled over them with oppressive sway? What could better confirm in their minds that it was the Creator of all who had come to redeem them, when they with their own eyes beheld the order of nature subverted? and must not in this way ignorance itself have been taught to acknowledge that no one, but He who made all, could work those miracles which Moses was the agent to perform? That the lesson was effectually and indelibly inculcated, no one can deny; for even to this day we tell to our children of the signs which the Lord has done in Egypt; and we ourselves know, and other nations will be brought to know, that He is the Lord, whose being is without end, and whose power is without limit. And all this was effected by punishing those meriting punishment, and by delaying for a few days only the redemption which no

earthly power was able to retard beyond a brief space; for Pharaoh himself at last said: "Go you out from the midst of my people."

The foregoing explanation is founded upon the assumption that the words "I will harden Pharaoh's heart" mean to express an active interference of the Deity to prevent him from doing what was asked of him. And we have seen that even then there is no cause whatever for any reasoning man to complain of the justice of God. In acquiescing in the usual version of the words ואני אקשה את לב פרעה and ואני אחזק את לבו I did so merely, because I do not wish to be looked upon as though I were anxious to strike out a path of my own in commenting on the Bible. Nevertheless it appears to me that the phrases I have quoted: "I will strengthen his heart," and "I will make hard the heart of Pharaoh," mean nothing more than that the Almighty would allow Pharaoh to act according to his natural inclination, consonantly with his ignorance of the eternal Lord's power, and in conformity with his long course of sinning and tyranny. And let it be observed, that it would have sounded incredible, were the Mosaic record to tell us that the king of Egypt had dismissed full half a million and more of able-bodied workmen, who built his cities, his palaces, and his canals, by the command of an outcast and a refugee from justice, as Moses confessedly was, or after an unusual occurrence or two, even if there had been a flow of blood in the river, or a swarm of frogs, of noxious insects, of wild beasts, and of locusts,—nay we may add the plagues of a pestilence among cattle, and blains upon the bodies of men. We will not refer

to the other plagues, because they were decidedly too terrific to be lost sight of, or to be regarded as of trifling import: still, when the hail had ceased, and the three days' gloom had been dispelled, it may again be said that they were not of that stamp to make a proud despot waver, who was considered among his people but little less than a god. We may therefore assume, that the words "I will harden Pharaoh's heart" are only intended to convey, that God would not use any direct influence to bring about a change of heart or purpose in the king, which we must assume would have been in his power, as the Proverbs say: "The heart of kings is like water in the hand of the Lord, to whithersoever He willeth He turneth it;" so also say the prophets: "Assyria is the rod of my wrath;" "Cyrus my servant." And God merely announced to Moses, that nothing but intense conviction, brought about by the force of circumstances, should induce Pharaoh to relent, just as is the case with an ordinary sinner, who perseveres in his misconduct till destruction threatens him openly. Thus also answered Moses, when Pharaoh, during the plague of hail, while thunder and lightning and icy stones terrified by their unusual violence a land in which storms are unknown, said, "The Lord is the righteous One, and I and my people are wicked;" "And thou and thy people, I know, that not yet are you afraid of the Lord God;" and immediately thereupon we read: "And when Pharaoh saw that had ceased the rain, and the hail, and the thunder, he repeated to sin, and made heavy his heart, himself and his servants." Let it at the same time be observed, that in no one place is it said at

the announcement of a plague that the Lord would prevent Pharaoh from complying, if he were so minded. It follows, in consequence, that Pharaoh could have averted the punishment, just as at a later period the people of Nineveh did, who, by command of their king, returned in sincere repentance, thinking: "Who that knoweth himself guilty, let him return; then the Almighty will change his intention, and leave off from his burning anger, and we may not perish." Indeed no other reason can be assigned for the repeated missions of Moses, again and again, to the oppressor; but he would not relent; he would not let Israel go and sacrifice to the Lord: till, and only when, the storm burst over his own heart, and when his own son, his first born, who was to have sat on his throne, perished before his father's eyes, when every house was one of mourning, when in every home there was a corpse, when the land was filled with unheard-of lamentation. Then was no longer any resisting the evident power so strongly displayed, and through the force of his intense sufferings the order for the dismissal of the Israelites was given, and they were fairly driven out of the land. If this view of the subject be the correct one, which I conscientiously believe it to be, it leaves no other difficulty to encounter, than the prediction cited: "And I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go." For some one might say: "How could Pharaoh relent, if God knew beforehand how he would act?" But this same question would be conclusive argument against our possessing a free will in any thing, for our not doing what God knows beforehand would be counteracting his

omniscience. But here, brethren, our inquiry must stop; we are free agents, and so was Pharaoh, as well as all other sinners; and how far to reconcile this fact with the knowledge of God, is not for us to inquire; for this would be arrogating to ourselves wisdom and knowledge equal to the ever-blessed and exalted One. But at this point we should submit, and never disturb ourselves with the perplexing reflection; for no human research will ever be able to understand a question which there are no means of solving, unless God himself should vouchsafe an especial revelation, and tender us a greater share of knowledge of his ways than is yet in our possession.

In the foregoing, I have briefly endeavoured to answer an objection on which infidels rely so much. I approached it, as I have done on other questions, with no view of showing my skill as a disputant, but solely as an humble vindicator of the pure word of God.—I trust, that his spirit has guided me sufficiently to confirm your minds, if not altogether to remove every doubt. One more worthy, more learned, and more able, might doubtless have done the subject more justice; but such as I am, I sincerely hope, that the arguments adduced and the illustrations given have proved to you (at least they have done so to myself) that "the law of God is perfect, it refresheth the soul; the judgments of the Lord are upright, they are righteous together," and that objections raised only tend to confirm the believer the stronger in his well-founded faith. Ay, believing in the Lord's truth, and confiding in his law, are the balm of life, the source of peace of mind on earth, and of unending delight hereafter; but to doubt of

his rectitude, to waver in our faith, will lead to inevitable destruction. It is not blind faith, a confidence in things or dogmas not understood, that is demanded; but a conviction that in God there is no fault, and that whatever is inexplicable to us of his workings towards ourselves and others is ascribable, not to Him, but to our imperfect vision and to our circumscribed knowledge, which cannot be removed till we have cast off the mortal coil, which now encumbers our souls in this state of probation. And thus we read in the last verse of Hosea: "Who is wise and marketh it, intelligent and knoweth it, that faultless are the ways of the Lord, and the righteous walk therein, but the wicked stumble upon them." Let us then be the righteous, whose meekness sees nothing but justice in the ways of God; and let us shun the thoughts of the wicked, who would dare to rise in judgment against Him who is Almighty in strength and All-powerful, and whose wisdom is without measure!

Father! Thou spokest through thy prophet that Thou wouldst be a small sanctuary to us in our captivity. O do Thou fulfil thy promise to us who pray for thy assistance in this house, which thy children have consecrated to thy service! Ten years,* we acknowledge it in humility and thankfulness, have now elapsed since the doors of this house of prayer were first opened to admit the faithful to the footstool of thy glory which invisibly sits enthroned among us. O let thy light spread from this spot unto the minds

* The new Synagogue Mikveh Israel was consecrated on Sabbath *Bo-el-Paroh* of the year 5585, ten years before the above was spoken.

of thy children, let them see the righteousness of thy ways, and may for many years assemblies after assemblies of the faithful come hither to worship Thee in truth and sincerity. And O, vouchsafe thy protection to this congregation, and preserve them free from corroding care, from sickness, and from affliction; and hold thy shield over us, that no oppression from the stranger to thy name and worship may reach us. And if in our obduracy we should go astray, if we will join in our wickedness the nations of the earth, and be like them: then let the outpoured anger, which Thou hast threatened through thy prophet Ezekiel, fall on us in mercy, and guide us, through it, back to thy service; for we know that in punishing even Thou only willest our own happiness. May it be also thy will, O our Father and God of our ancestors! that this congregation, the children of the house of the Hope of Israel, may ever be acceptable to Thee, and may thy protection be held out over this house, that it may never want for those who will flock to it to worship Thee after the ordinances of thy law. And do Thou, in thy infinite mercy, grant us peace and prosperity, and remove from among us causeless hatred and envy, and plant thy love and thy fear in our hearts that we may not sin; so that walking in thy presence we may be worthy of thy favour, together with all Israel our brethren. Amen!

Shebat 6th. } 5595.
February 5th. }

DISCOURSE XXXVIII.

RECOMPENSE AND RETRIBUTION.

O Father! to whom from the going out to the setting of the sun hearts are raised with adoration, cause thy light to fill our minds with wisdom, and open Thou our souls to receive the true knowledge of thy greatness and goodness.—And when the ills of life pass over us, when troubles on troubles are thickly heaped on our heads: O then cause us to behold the light springing out of darkness, which Thou hast always sent to console those who in righteousness feared and loved Thee. Amen!

Brethren!

Institutions, human and divine, have been devised to prevent the doing of evil, commands upon commands have been promulgated to admonish the world against the commission of wrong; and yet we see the right, the universally acknowledged right, disregarded, and the universally admitted wrong daily practised. This fact is by no means flattering to our self-love, nor is it without its baneful effects upon the spectators of the wrong that is done. The evil committed by the parent is an excuse for the child and the grandchild to go and do likewise, and the way of death, if trodden by the mother, appears a path leading to endless pleasures to the thoughtless daughter. The pretext is that the child need not be better than

the father, as though the wrong committed by one could be beautified by its being farther propagated in a succeeding generation. And what can be more absurd than such reasoning, if reasoning it can be called? is one man to stammer because his father was heavy of speech? is one to limp because his mother was lame? is one brother to endeavour to become cross-eyed, because the eldest of the family has unfortunately an obliquity of vision? True, the moralist has to acknowledge, that the mania called fashion has at times made lisping seem a beauty in speaking, and has imposed upon the multitude modes of dress and habits of life extremely pernicious to health or even to personal beauty, which is endeavoured to be promoted by them. But is it reasonable that religion and morality should accommodate themselves to deformity, because deformity has become fashionable, or because an example of this kind has been set by one high in authority, renowned for wisdom, or loved as an esteemed parent, teacher, or friend? What has another's doing wrong to do with my own course of life? am I less accountable, because I have associates in sin? is my turpitude less heinous, because another is equally guilty with myself?—All these questions need only to be stated to answer themselves, and the cause of virtue, of piety, and of religion, which are all the same thing, obedience to God's law, must be furthered by a proper investigation of the same.—Now it may be asked: "How is it that so much crime is constantly practised, since the knowledge of the right is so universally spread abroad?"—To this it may be answered, that the apparent impunity with which many commit crimes causes others to view sin

as a matter not so much to be abhorred; and looking only at the surface of things, if an action is not very abhorrent, it may be attempted, and if it be once attempted, the commission of it, and the satisfaction its contemplation in thought affords, render it at length as something more desirable even than the opposite virtue. But the impunity with which sin is practised is more apparent than real; for though the lightning of Heaven does not immediately consume the blasphemer; for though the sudden pestilence does not annihilate instantly the Sabbath-breaker; for though the earth does not open and swallow up, like in times of old the rebellious Korah, those who violate the covenant of Abraham, to whom God spoke "Walk before me and be perfect:" still the sinners may rest assured that their sin is not forgotten, and that not one action of theirs will go ultimately without its condign visitation. And then God, our Father, is a merciful Being, who waits with long patience and paternal kindness to see whether the strayed one will not return to his embrace, and, throwing off his load of guilt, exclaim in the sincerity of a renovated heart: "Father! Thou who knowest the weakness of the human heart, receive in kindness the returning, repentant child."—But even grant, that the sinner will never repent, that year after year, month after month, week after week, day after day, nay, hour after hour, he increases the amount of debt he incurs to God: yet we may rest assured, that no length of time, no distance of place, and no change of circumstances will hide the malefactor from the all-seeing Eye, whose search penetrates into all secrets, into all space, and into all time. And thus, therefore,

if even no cloud whatever should darken the prosperity of the wicked one, if no gnawing, no compunction, of a disturbed overcharged conscience should ever disturb his waking thoughts or his sleeping hours: still a life of earthly bliss may be followed by those awful torments, pains and punishments to which the holy Scriptures allude, but of which no particular description has been vouchsafed to us. And of this speaks Isaiah in the end of his prophecy: "And they will go out and look at the corpses of the men, who have acted wickedly towards me; for their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abomination to all flesh." It is true that many persons ridicule the idea of punishment after death; but their ridicule does in nowise remove the fact of its being so. And grant, that the belief we entertain were not founded upon fact: at all events there cannot be any doubt of the possibility of a continuance to exist after this mortal body has been dissolved again into dust and ashes, and of the likelihood that, as there is an existence separate and distinct from earthly existence, there may also be reward and punishment separate and distinct from earthly reward and punishment.—We must admit, that the existence of a soul entirely severed from the body, the existence of a spirit without the slightest attributes of matter, is something very difficult of comprehension to us; but on the other hand, such a state of things is not by any means impossible, even according to the views of a worldly philosophy; and no one dares to deny at least this possibility, till he has, more than has been done hitherto, found out the hidden properties of matter—what are the vital fluids of inorganic nature,

such as heat, light, and electricity; what is the ultimate consistency of material things; and by what conformation, unless it be a vital spark, a part of the Deity from above, man alone is enabled to use an articulate language at will, and make thousands of changes in a few elementary sounds, till he has elicited the innumerable variety of words and of syllables which constitute the languages of mankind; by what means, unless it be by a thinking soul, a spirit apart from matter, he can overcome almost every obstacle, which inert matter or brute force oppose to his progress. I could multiply these unanswerable arguments a thousand-fold; I might instance all the improvements in the arts and sciences, the progress in civilization, which late years have witnessed, to prove the existence of a peculiar essence, which we for want of a better term call the *human soul*, which is different, in every sense of the word, from organized nature which surrounds us; but it would be useless and moreover tiresome to you, my brethren, who with me, as Jews and as believers, fully believe in the permanence of our soul in being after the dissolution of the body.—And can it be possible, even if there were no light from revelation to inform us, that a system so noble, so incomprehensibly great, could have been created for no other purpose than to enable a handsomer mould of clay than that of the dog to live only for a brief space of time, more comfortably perhaps, but at last, just like a dog, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to fight, to snarl, to propagate its species, and to sink at length into death, into darkness, into oblivion, into non-existence? What need had man of the inextinguishable thirst for knowledge, the inexhaustible

desire for ulterior happiness, if he were created for no other end? Would he for that alone be enabled to cross the ocean in search of wisdom; ascend beyond the clouds in search of knowledge; dive into the depth of the sea, go down into the bowels of the earth in search of adventure, and direct his searching gaze into the starry heaven: would God have given him such vast, extensive powers, I ask, merely that he might be liable to more distress, subject to more misfortunes, exposed to more diseases than the dog, but like him to die away into non-existence?—The idea is too monstrous to be assumed, even for argument's sake, as reasonable; and we may freely assert, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul will only be disputed by the wicked transgressor of God's law, who thereby vainly hopes to steel his heart against the self-accusations of his own conscience, that he may be enabled to follow the path of sin without any compunctious visiting of his inward monitor.

For the sake therefore of following the bent of a sinful inclination, for the purpose of chiming in with a pernicious fashion which leads to ungodliness, does the reckless sinner deny the most consolatory hope which religion and revelation impart, and thereby he incurs the more deservedly the very punishment which he vainly strives to reason away, as though reasoning, even the most plausible, were in the least able to remove what is true.—But brightly beams the light of hope for those who are watchful over their deeds, for the humble and the pious, who, when suffering the ills which as men they cannot even desire to escape, look upon the world beyond the grave as their true abode, where they may dwell securely, un-

burdened with care and sorrow, released from pain and grief, enlightened in wisdom, purified by trials, and blest of their Maker, and basking in the sunshine of his unending and unchanging favour. And thus said Solomon in his Ecclesiastes, eighth chapter, 11th and 12th verses: "Because punishment doth not follow evil deeds quickly, therefore becometh the heart of the children of men careless and practiseth the evil.—But let the sinner commit sins a hundred-fold, and experience indulgence: yet am I convinced, that true happiness will be the sure recompense of those that fear God, while they fear Him."—And yet people doubt, and become faint-hearted under every tribulation, and when sorrow and trouble enter their doors in the round which the evil destiny takes in the world, they imagine their own misfortune the most grievous, and they accuse the Deity of injustice in heaping so much distress upon them who are so very innocent, so very charitable, so much devoted to the practice of religious duties! And as they see their neighbours' faces drest up with smiles, as they behold their friends in apparent happiness, as they do not discover that their enemies have any cause to complain: they come to the conclusion that they themselves alone are unhappy; and they ask, what advantage it can be to them that they practise so much self-denial in the cause of religion and the exercise of humanity, since they are exposed to trials, from which others are exempt? Weak souls, like these we have been describing, are but too apt to yield their shallow piety to their misfortunes, and their untried honesty becomes changed into fraud and deceit; as they conceive that piety and rectitude do not bring any advantage, be-

cause they have found out, that they in the exercise of both suffered misfortunes which, as said, they believe others did not encounter.—But such arguing is altogether false. Those, whose faces bear the everlasting smile are not necessarily happy; those whom the world terms fortunate are not always to be envied; and but lift the veil which hides their inmost heart, and you might weep over the distresses of the smiling sufferer; could you but dive into the soul of the envied happy one, you would be startled at the accumulation of wo you would there discover. And as for the idea that those who are irreligious and dishonest have the advantage over you who are suffering the accumulated ills of life: it is all again but outward show; impiety, although it scoffs, is still but a wretched defence against the canker-worm of conscience: and he who luxuriates in the spoils abstracted from the deceived friend, from the confiding stranger, the beguiled widow, and the helpless orphan, though a credulous world flatter and fawn upon him, he too is at heart a wretch, tormented beyond endurance, fearing exposure, dreading the loss of a reputation which he has endeavoured to establish, and trembling at the thought of being deprived of that ill-gotten wealth, to obtain which he has sold his immortal soul to perdition.—This much may be said in answer to the complaint, that we alone are suffering. And in reply to the accusation of God's justice, as though He punished us when not deserving it, we should consider that not one of us is free from fault, that not one of us can boast of having never infringed the laws which God has ordained. If then we do suffer, let us not forget that we are sinning mortals, and that the inflic-

tion is sent to admonish us that we have erred, or to warn us that the path we were intending to pursue was one of perdition. For God, who knows the thoughts of men even before they are accomplished, sends us tokens of displeasure at our intended conduct, if we have in other cases followed his will; as the prophetess says, "He guardeth the feet of his righteous ones;" and as Ezekiel says in another place, "And what riseth on your heart shall not be done." Now, therefore, if such a warning is sent we should, in place of repining, investigate and see in what we have been sinning, and amend our lives while there is yet time, before the sands in the hourglass of life have entirely run to waste; and if we committed any wrong, if our uniform prosperity caused our hearts to wax proud and our soul to become presumptuous: we should bow with thankfulness to the chastisement, and bless the all-wise One for having stretched out as it were his potent hand, and snatched us as a firebrand from amidst the consuming fire.

But if we grumble at the dispensation instead of repenting; if we will not heed the warning when it is kindly given; if we resist the whisperings of the holy spirit which tells us to beware; if we, in short, hurry down the road which leads to the pit of destruction: who is it that is blamable? is it He whose ways are all just and true? or we, the sinning, foolish worms of the earth who, despite of our shortsightedness and our exposure to fallibility and corruption, dare to measure our insufficient righteousness, be this ever so great, against the justice of Him who cannot err? Besides it must not be forgotten, that perhaps here never was an infliction sent upon the righteous

which was beyond their endurance,* and those who have stood firm amidst their trials, how purely have they come out of the furnace in which their integrity had been probed.—Besides the cause of sin just exposed there is another which assumes the air of a philanthropic and even a pious cast of reasoning, and thus militates against the dictates of revealed religion. Persons wishing to free themselves from religious observances assert constantly, that the law could not possibly have been intended to act with such burdensome severity upon us. They say, the benignant Being whom we adore could not have any pleasure in our punishing our bodies with fasting; He who loves all his creatures alike could never think to lay Israel under so many and disadvantageous restrictions as regards the observance of the Sabbaths and the holy days; the abstaining from forbidden food; the restriction with regard to forming family connexions with persons of other nations, and laws of similar import; and some even inveigh with apparent bitterness and sincerity against the sealing of our children with

* This brings to my mind the affecting history of an Israelitish female, who in the midst of the sack of the town in which she lived saw a brutal soldier entering her apartment. He endeavoured to seize her; "Stop," she said, "I can give you a charm which if you wear it will prevent your being wounded." The soldier incredulous asked her if she was in earnest; "I am perfectly in earnest, and to prove my sincerity you may fire at me as I hold this paper to my heart." She stood firm; held a paper upon which the pretended charm was written to her heart, the soldier fired, and to his amazement the Jewish maiden lay a bleeding corpse at his feet; she died, but her spirit came undefiled before her Maker. Thus we see that, as this example partly illustrates, there is no situation in which the righteous are altogether without that heavenly assistance which always comes to their aid.

the covenant of Abraham, as cruel and barbarous.—And such reasoning as this it is by which people mislead themselves and others. "God," they say, "could not command such things;" but we say and maintain He did command them, and moreover threatens punishment for non-obedience. Now even waive this; and what does the objection amount to? to no more than this: that whereas persons find the Jewish law demanding certain trials of their faith, which cannot under ordinary contingencies cause the most remote actual harm, and being unwilling to make any sacrifices whatever except such as tally precisely with their notions of justice and conscience, they reject them at once as unreasonable. Is this not true? But let us take a few of the objections and review them in brief detail.—"God cannot wish that we should fast," the lukewarm assert. But we say He does wish it, provided the punishing of the body is accompanied by a sincere repentance and by a knowledge why and wherefore we fast, that is to say, that in doing penance we direct our thoughts and our prayers to the almighty One from whom all forgiveness must come.—Even without this absolute preparation for repentance there is one day of penance ordained, on which every Israelite is to abstain from food and drink; by which it was intended to effect, that at the annual recurrence of so solemn a day, many, if not all, should be led to look into their deeds and to amend whatever they might find defective, and to endeavour to heal up breaches of social friendship and brotherly love, which clashing interests may have interrupted in other periods of the year.—Is such an institution reasonable?

From amidst the mass of idolaters, worshippers of graven and hewn images, God wanted to select a people to be his own peculiar treasure for ever; and He appeared to them when they groaned under heavy afflictions, and redeemed them from servitude to freedom on the day the anniversary whereof we are soon to celebrate.—His people they were to be, to receive his holy laws as a trust, although it should ultimately be made the rule of life for all mankind, when they had become fit for the pure ideal worship of his holiness and greatness. To prevent their being mixed up with other nations He cast their lot in the most lovely portion, and He surrounded the sons of Jacob with a wall of defence as it were, by imparting to them peculiar statutes and ordinances, and He gave them in love and kindness his Sabbaths of rest and his holy days for rejoicing, and He interdicted them from mingling in the indulgencies of the animal frame with the nations of the earth; and He therefore forbade things to these permitted; and also, as the Israelites were but the fewest of nations, He ordained that no Jew should take as the wife of his bosom the daughter of the stranger, lest by so doing the name of Jacob might become lost from amongst the nations of the earth.—And from our birth we were bought as God's servants, and therefore when one week has passed over the infant's head the seal of God's covenant, holy and everlasting, is to be impressed on him; since God says, "For my servants are the children of Israel." By this ceremony it is that we are made perfect, that we are rendered just as was commanded, and the parent that can refuse his child this induction into the holy covenant has

left it imperfect; for only through its observance was Abraham made perfect.—But alas! we have fallen upon evil times! Philosophizing by ignorant and presumptuous pretenders is the order of the day, and well-nigh have those, who would gladly raise their voice against the spreading corruption, been rendered dumb, since they perceive their counsels neglected, and their solemn admonitions unheeded. Ay, they are commanded to be silent, the world wishes not the truth to be told; yes, we can sin, we can glory in sinning; but let no one dare to tell us that we are sinning; we must needs hate him who reveals us to ourselves; and thus we go on calling our teachers bigots and fanatics, and flatter ourselves that this is the real balm which must and will for ever silence the voice of an accusing conscience. "All is priest-craft! all is the invention of ignorance! all the machinations of dark ages!" and if called on but to listen to reason, we turn away our unwilling ear, and say: "We are already convinced, we know better, much better than our ignorant ancestors."—But sons and daughters of Israel! shall it indeed come to pass, shall the dreaded day then come, that the name which has so long graced the pages of history shall at last fade away? Will you, yourselves, through obduracy accomplish that which united nations failed to effect by persecutions unheard of, by banishments, by slaughter of all that was good and wise among us? Is the institution of yon holy Decalogue a work of priestcraft—of deception?—is the promulgation of the unity of God the invention of ignorance?—is the enactment of our benignant laws the machination of dark ages?—And what are we to receive in the place

of all this great and glorious institution?—the dictates of a heartless, soulless, lifeless philosophy, the imaginings of selfish, proud, arrogant men, who affecting learning, but really ignorant,—who pretending to virtue, but really vicious, dare to call themselves philosophers, as though they alone, preeminently, were the lovers and true friends of wisdom!—Shall it come to this? No! never will such debasement spread over the earth, never will the world stand and see such wickedness consummated!—In the meantime, God will always preserve some men as instruments, who will be deputed to speak of and expound the law proclaimed from Sinai; and if the voice of one be hushed by death, another will be there to supply his place, and if one should like Jonah be afraid from one cause or another to announce the word that is within him, another and another yet will be at hand to fulfil the sacred mission. —And answer me: Was ever Israel so forsaken as that no one could be found to stand forth as the defender of the law? and can we believe that the world, that we, should so much retrograde, as to have none willing to go out with God's message upon his lips? No, let sinners not flatter themselves, that the voice is dead which spoke through Moses. God never dies, and even were there not a single man to speak, the word itself survives still, and will yet longer survive and strike terror into the heart which yields itself to sin.

Thus I have endeavoured to give, as briefly as I could, answers to the questions which presented themselves to our view; the task however has been but very imperfectly accomplished, since so little has been

said of what suggests itself upon even a cursory view of the subject. But as it is one so fruitful in contemplation, I may call your attention to it again perhaps in a short time.—Having now in a measure exposed by the light of reason and sound common sense, alone, the folly of the motives of sin, let us turn our attention to the concurrent announcements of prophecy, which treat upon the subject. Malachi says, chapter iii., verse 5:

וקרבתי אליכם למשפט והייתי עד ממהר במכשפים
ובמנאפים ובנשבעים לשקר ובעשקי שכר שכיר
אלמנה ויתום ומטי גר ולא יראוני אמר ה׳ צבאות׃
כי אני ה׳ לא שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם׃
מלאכי ג׳ ה׳–ו׳׃

"And I will come near unto you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against wizards, and adulterers, and those that swear falsely, and that withhold the pay of the hireling, and that injure the widow, the orphan, and pervert the cause of the stranger, and did not fear me, saith the Lord of Zebaoth. For I the Lord change not, and you, children of Jacob do not perish."

Here the prophet announces the punishment which is to befal the transgressors against the law of God, and confirms the certainty thereof, by stating that He, the Lord, changes not, and consequently, if the punishment be even deferred, the day of judgment will come at length, when the unchangeable One will be sure to mete out even-handed justice. And continues the prophet: "And you shall go out and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that served God and him that hath not

served Him. For behold the day will come burning like a furnace, and all the transgressors and evil-doers shall be like straw, and it shall burn them up the day that cometh, saith the Lord of Zebaoth, who will not leave them root nor branch.—But to you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall shine, and healing shall be in his wings." In the same strain speaks Isaiah, chapter lxv.: "I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, that go the way which is not good after their own thoughts, a people——that sit upon graves, and lodge among the monuments, that eat the flesh of the swine, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels, that say, 'Stand by thyself, come not near me; I am holier than thou;' these are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burneth all the day."—And says Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the grape; and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servant's sake, not to destroy the whole; and I will bring out from Jacob a seed, and from Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and my elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. —But you that forsake the Lord—behold my servants shall eat and you shall be hungry; behold my servants shall drink, and you shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall be glad, and you shall be ashamed; behold my servants shall shout from a joyous heart, and you shall cry from a heart of pain, and howl from a broken spirit."—And in conclusion he says of the righteous: "And it shall come to pass, that 'ere they yet call, I will answer, while yet they are speaking, I will hear."—Ezekiel also confirms the foregoing promises, when saying, chapter xx.: "As sure as I live,

saith the Lord God, if not with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured forth I will rule over you."—And farther: "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you then in the covenant which has been handed down. And I will select from among you those that have rebelled and transgressed against me, from the land of their sojourning I will bring them out, but to the land of Israel they shall not come, and you shall know that I am the Lord."—I have in the above endeavoured to give you a few passages, selected from a very large number, to prove that the judgment of God must sooner or later overtake the transgressors, and if his mercy should delay the punishment, it is nevertheless only deferred, not relinquished.—What has thus been proved by common sense and Holy Writ, and what your own experience so amply confirms, requires no admonition to recommend to your serious attention. Let it then sink deeply into your hearts, you who are from the house of Israel, you who have in your ancestors partaken of the miraculous deliverance from Egypt; let it be a lesson never to be forgotten, that upon the way of religion there is ultimate life, although the path be beset by dangers and pain; and that the road of sin leads to destruction, although its first appearance may be ever so inciting, and seemingly invite you to a multitude of pleasures.—You who are fathers! you who are mothers! impress on your children's minds, that those alone who love God can have peace, but that to the wicked there is no peace! and you youth and maidens who wish to reach a happy old age, and who desire a tranquil and peaceful end, remember that long life and happiness, and

peace of mind, and the favour of God are only to be found upon the way of righteousness.

Father above! Thine be the glory and the kingdom, as already Thine are the power, the greatness, and goodness. Let thy countenance shine unto all the world, and call and guide all children of men to thy holy service. And grant to us, thy people, whom Thou didst redeem from Egypt by thy power which Thou didst display, thy fatherly protection, and preserve us from annihilation in our captivity. And O! cause thy kingdom to take root in our hearts, and incline our souls to return to Thee in sincerity. And when Thou comest to chastise us for our transgressions, O remember then that we are flesh, sinners like our fathers. And may it be thy will to remember again the seed of Jacob in favour, and send us thy anointed servant, the Messiah, son of David, and again show us wonders, as Thou didst when we went forth from Egypt. Amen.

Nissan 11th. } 5595.
April 10th. }

DISCOURSE XXXIX.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

O Holy One, whom the heavens and the heavens of heaven cannot contain, come to dwell in the hearts of thy children that worship thee!—O infinite One, to whose existence there is no beginning and no end-

ing, be with us thy creatures in the day of our affliction, and save and protect us, whenever we call on Thee!—O incomprehensible One, who art hidden from all thought, elevated high—far above—immeasurably—beyond all conception, come Thou and instruct our thirsting souls of thy wisdom, and instil into our hearts a love and knowledge of thy benignant law, which in thy abundant mercy Thou gavest unto our ancestors, when Thou didst stretch forth the right hand of thy salvation to buy them unto Thee as a treasure and a people! And if we err, do Thou, who art the most merciful, lead us back to thy embrace, and shield us there from evil as the eagle overshadows his brood by the protection of his wings; for Thou art our Father, and Thou art our King, and beside Thee there is not to us Shield, Protector, and Saviour, and without Thee there is no God; but Thou alone art everlasting, and Thine then be the glory, and the kingdom, and the adoration of all flesh. Amen.

Brethren!

To the man whose eyes are opened by a knowledge of the way of righteousness; to the soul that adores her God and Creator; to the mind filled with love for mankind, it must be a matter of surprise and grief to observe, among the multifarious and varied classes that constitute the mass of mankind, so little perception of the utility and necessity of a religious education for their children, or of the duty every one is under to make himself familiar with the behests of revelation. What pains are not taken to teach our children the tongues of various nations; how much

labour is not spent in the pursuit of worldly sciences; what stress is not laid upon the acquisition of mere accomplishment even;—but only touch the subject of religion and branches therewith connected, and you are at once told, that it is quite useless to learn Hebrew, a language no more spoken, consequently of no practical use; and as for religious knowledge—that can be obtained by reading the sacred writings; and morality can be gotten very easily by going to churches of the various sects amongst whom we live; practical knowledge of political sciences are promulgated in worldly schools; and consequently there can be no necessity for spending years, and months, and days in the obtainment of religious information, properly so termed. That such reasoning prevails, cannot be denied, and that it is very fallacious and very pernicious, must be evident from the first view a candid man takes of the subject. Still so many are misled, and so many have become irreligious, immoral, and I fear infidel, that I beg you, my brethren, to bear with me whilst I endeavour to show the necessity of a particular religious education for our children, and the obligation which rests upon parents to qualify themselves for the holy task incumbent on them, as fathers and mothers, of bringing up the pledges of conjugal love, the trust confided to them by God, in the way which best comports with the love and duty which the creature owes to the Creator, and which secures in the best possible manner individual and general happiness. I have alluded to a knowledge of the Hebrew as in some manner connected with religion; and since all our forms of worship and our sacred records are in that language: it

may not be out of place to offer a few observations to prove the necessity of retaining it in our worship, and to deprecate a substitution of any other in its stead. A national tongue binds together the people speaking it in one bond, and cements a union hardly otherwise attainable. Such a thing may be, as nations or tribes speaking different languages being governed by the same law; but where is that fellow-feeling, that brotherly attachment which people of the same speech feel? Not to go farther than a neighbouring country,* which was conquered now about eighty years ago, where the people have never been molested, as far as I know, in their laws, privileges, and even mere prejudices; add to which that the benefits of an extension of wholesome laws, of freedom from public burdens, of a wide-spreading commerce have been conferred: and still the difference of language between the rulers and the ruled has been the constant cause of heart-burning and contention, and a united effort for the public good is hardly thought of. Let us apply this single fact, which can be strengthened by a thousand others, from ancient and modern story, to our own case. In the land of the East, where first were cradled the germs of civilization and knowledge, our nation sprung up like a tender sprout, like a feeble shoot, from amidst the multitudes of nations. Abraham wandered out of his father's idolatrous home and went forth over the fair regions of the South, the harbinger of peace wherever he came. He spoke

* Canada, where the French is the vernacular in the eastern portion.

the language of Shem his ancestor, a language forcible and clear, full of elegant imagery and true to nature in its figures and sublime conceptions. With the growth of the people the language also grew into a national dialect, and even in the midst of the powerful and polished state of Egypt the Israelites still retained the language of Heber. Think you, it was a close bond during their dreadful sufferings? Most undoubtedly; and what better could have been found to make their hearts glow with rapturous hope, when the father bondman told to the child, whose prospect too was slavery and bondage, of the wonders which God had displayed unto their simple shepherd-ancestors, and how He had promised (using the sacred words of the holy Jacob) והיה אלהים עמכם והשיב אתכם אל ארץ אבתיכם "And God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers?" Think you that hope could have fled at words like these? Think you that the language too did not fall on the ear like sweet music which bids the mourning soul rejoice?—Anon the law was given, and in words clear and distinct the Most High announced his will.—The words spoken we have read this day, and the language again was the language of Abraham. Israel conquered the land of promise, and dwelt in their inheritance in security. And nobly too did the language do its work, and there arose a Deborah to sing the song; there was a David, who attuned his harp to inimitable and undying praise; there was a Solomon, whose wisdom yet teaches the world; an Isaiah, whose eloquence yet rouses the heart; a Jeremiah, who yet bids the tears to flow at the downfall of the populous city,—and a host of others, whose genius and whose piety must

in all ages command admiration. And when Israel fell, because they had become sinful, and when the language was supplanted by the speech of various nations: it found restorers in Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah, and Malachi, besides many more who assisted them in the holy task. And although the Hebrew has been banished by our dispersion from being our every-day language: it yet holds, I may freely say, a higher place, it embraces all that remains of the wisdom of our ancestors; nay more, it contains all the commands which God revealed to mankind for their guidance! This is the Hebrew, and this is briefly its history. Despite now of our dispersion—despite of our being, alas! known as Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Poles, Grecians, Tartars, and by numerous other names: still the Hebrew has always maintained its position in the love and the heart of all true Israelites, and has also constituted the bond which has kept united the captivity of Jacob in all parts of the world! And here comes one from the burning plains of Africa; there another from the icy fields of the Arctic regions; yonder pilgrim calls the highlands of Middle Asia his home; and this one is an exile from Spain's blood-stained sierras. And listen! as the *messenger* addresses the throne of Grace, how a simultaneous Amen bursts from all their lips! the language they hear is not to them the language of the stranger, the sounds, though ancient sounds, are to their ears familiar as the first breathing of childhood's years, and in the land of their exile, where they all meet but as strangers, the holy tongue is their bond, and by it they do meet as a band of brothers, and all thus unite to call with one

voice upon their God, who is truly the Preserver of Israel.—Does it then comport with reason to retain the knowledge of so great a gift? or shall we idly throw it off as a thing whose value is lost; forsake it as a spring whose waters are dried up? Never may this be! The blessing which this inheritance has always bestowed is of yet daily recurrence, and who would madly neglect what is of vital importance to him? Thus you have presented to you, brethren, an illustration, an argument would require more time, of the object and advantage of the Hebrew to us, as Jews. It is, namely, our national, our vernacular tongue; it is one of the links in that great chain which has ever firmly bound Israel together as one people. I take it for granted, that there are but few who wish its knowledge altogether extirpated; but still there are also an immense number, especially in this country, and I grieve to say in this city, perhaps among those who now hear me, that think but lightly of the importance of its acquisition by a careful study. But as the acquaintance with an instrument so valuable must be in the same proportion useful, it is certainly a matter of surprise that no more is done to further the means of its attainment. As a mere matter of curiosity much is studied; more things again receive attention solely because they are elegant; and therefore it is inconceivable, how a Jew can rest satisfied with an entire ignorance of his sacred language, when the opportunity for the removal of such unpardonable ignorance is within his reach. Even if means were not readily at hand, I should still think it the duty of every Israelite, no matter of what sex, station, or capacity, to endeavour to remedy the de-

fect with regard to teaching, or in other words, schools should be established wherein the instruction of the Hebrew should be one of the principal objects of education. If this were done, if the acknowledged defect were to be encountered by a united effort, it is impossible but that the blessing of God would attend the undertaking; and even in this western world, almost at the opposite extreme whence civilization commenced her course, even here I say, men honouring their brethren by their splendid acquirements in the learning of our ancients, and in a correct knowledge of biblical criticism, would crown the effort so piously undertaken and so happily accomplished.—But I speak of anticipations, of things I fear hardly to be realized!—too much of self-aggrandizement is the order of the day;—disinterested exertions for public good are occurrences but rarely witnessed;—and an enterprise which instead of bringing gain might occasion pecuniary loss, is not of the nature to claim the attention of capitalists, of men who, having already as much or more than they can consume in all human probability, must still go on increasing their stock of uncounted wealth, till all at once death arrests their extended grasp ere the perhaps intended good was even commenced. Some may think that I am too unjust towards those whom the world calls rich, it may appear to savour of disappointment to charge upon a class the transgressions of a few. But in reply to this I have merely to remark, that the fact of nothing or next to nothing having been done in so many places, and among others in this very town, warrants me in saying that persons having the power to lend a helping hand cannot be very sincere

in their professions towards furthering an education, the necessity of which has been amply shown, while they rest satisfied with merely giving vent to expressions of good wishes, and leave actions to others than themselves.* Our people suffer much in the estimation of the gentile world by such inexcusable negligence; and those, who value such a position and fame among the non-Israelites so highly, may rest assured that their indifference towards their own brethren and their own religious interests does by no means raise their standing; on the contrary, if we exert ourselves for our religion a little more energetically than we do, we may certainly succeed in obtaining the admiration of the gentiles, although their love may be denied to us, which I must sincerely declare is hardly attainable by an opposite course even. Yet let us hope, at least let hope not die away altogether, that the ancient spirit of devotion may one day be rekindled, and that the lukewarmness for the holy cause may be succeeded by an earnestness and zeal characteristic of a renovated love for righteous exertions. If this should happen, willingly would I be charged with having falsely accused and unjustly judged persons whose real value, and the depth of whose piety I had underrated. Yet, till this is made manifest, let the humble individual who now addresses you not be blamed for giving utterance to what he honestly believes to be the truth, especially as the words employed cannot wound the feeling, pride, or self-love,

* Since this was spoken, schools of the kind mentioned have been established in Philadelphia and elsewhere; but yet much remains to be done. May, '27.

or whatever else you may term it, of any one.—The consideration of the foregoing has almost insensibly drawn me from my purpose; I certainly had but intended merely to touch the importance of the Hebrew language; but if I should have succeeded in arresting your attention upon this interesting subject, I shall consider it as having done a service in the promotion of religious education.

Let us now revert to the general necessity there is for persons to become familiar with religious duties, and of the obligation they are under to impart the knowledge so obtained to the rising generation. Some one may now object: "That religion is so plainly taught in the Bible, that it requires no other study or investigation than reading the Scriptures." No one will deny that the sacred writings contain alone the whole system of revelation, and that their study and perusal must greatly improve the understanding. Nevertheless it is not to be lost sight of, that a great share of knowledge and of pious feelings are a pre-requisite towards entering upon this important study.—Take for example, that one should not be able to read, what use should he make of the book placed in his hand?—Suppose again one were blind, how is he to read?—Again, let us take a worldly man, constantly engaged in business, what time will he find to read? These are obvious cases; but there are an immense number of others equally powerful though less apparent in preventing persons from reading the Bible with profit. A person reading may not understand the phraseology employed; he may be ignorant of every collateral information which could enable him to comprehend the subject he peruses.

Another again may have seen wickedness daily practised; another in his youth may have heard the Bible-tenets abused and ridiculed, perhaps by his very parents: in all such cases, I would ask, What effect can mere reading have, without admitting a direct miracle almost, but to leave the reader either ignorant as he was before, or wicked as he was when he began? It is not necessary to argue a thing so very plain any farther, especially when we daily see, that without previous instruction very little is learned by intelligent and great minds even. There are so many avocations in the world, so much there is always to distract our attention, that we hardly can fix our minds to any particular pursuit or to any one especial study. If we are therefore to profit by any thing, or to become eminent in any calling, we must begin to learn early, and to apply at a later period the knowledge obtained by such slow degrees and at the expense of so much pains and labour.—Ask the musician when he began his brilliant career? generally the answer will be: "When I was a child."—The accomplished dancer: "I began at seven years old." To go to higher accomplishments: a painter evinced talents as a boy which had to be cultivated by a life of application; the advocate commences his studies when he begins to speak, and at his death at an advanced age he has yet much to learn; the physician on the day of his departure, perhaps discovers his whole theory of medicine to have been fallacious; in short, every pursuit, from the smallest to the highest, requires its apprenticeship, without which nothing can be gained; and yet to hear persons speak we should suppose that religious knowledge, the perception of our duties and

appointment on earth, the study of the word of God were matters, which can be picked up, so to say, by the child as he goes along in the world, or that perhaps such high knowledge is intuitive, and therefore to be obtained without any labour whatever. But who will maintain in sober earnestness that we do learn our duties from our own invention? or rather, is it not reduced to an uncontrovertible certainty that all knowledge, even that of morals and religion, so called by way of distinction, must be acquired by slow degrees? How then is the child to become religious? how is he to read the Bible understandingly, if instruction upon the most essential subject of life is to be withheld from him?—Some however may say: "That they will admit, that male children should be carefully instructed, that it is perfectly reasonable that those who are to become, as it is called, 'the lords of creation' should be qualified for their stations by practical training, that their morals should be carefully attended to and their mental culture strictly watched over. But females, they aver, need not that knowledge; theirs being a more dependent lot, it is immaterial whether they are high-learned in sacred literature or versed in the holy tongue; in short for them superficial reading is enough, for them it will be sufficient if the lighter branches of elegant learning are cultivated by them." As usual, this reasoning contains with some sprinkling of soundness a great share of fallacy, which will be apparent upon a slight review of the question. It is not to be denied, that it is almost entirely useless for the female to become learned in the strictest sense of the word; it would indeed unsex her, if she were to study the legal pro-

fession; if she were to step abroad as a physician; if she, forgetful of feminine decorum, would lay on the harness of war, and wage a mortal combat with the enemy. Well has it been commanded: "There shall not be man's apparel upon a woman;" for the female's sphere is not the highway, not the public streets, not the embattled field, not the public halls. But her home should be the place of her actions, there her influence should be felt, to soothe, to calm, to sanctify, to render happy the rugged career of a father, a brother, a husband, or a child. Yet, how is she to become qualified for this holy, for this noble task, if you leave her mind a blank—a barren waste—open to the evil seed which the world's corruption is but too apt to scatter? Behold this woman, watch her well, and then decide upon her claims to your regard and affections. She is proud, vain, frivolous, ignorant, vicious, and you despise her, she is no doubt undeserving of your regard; but the fault is hardly hers, it is her parents and teachers that are to blame. God has given her beauty, a mind alive to the charms of nature; a soul delighting in the romantic and the affectionate; wealth also has not been denied her, since her father has all which a covetous world might desire. Now mark how this girl is educated. Before she can lisp she hears her charms praised; her will is almost law to the dependents of the family; the rod of correction she never is made to feel, no matter what her faults may be; the word of reproof even is but sparingly administered; her schooling, next, is not of the highly morally elevated, but again the frivolous, the showy—grant it be elegant; but her soul is all the time uncultivated, because that is

never regarded as of the least importance to her; her beauty is to win admiration; her accomplishments are to captivate, and her wit is to dazzle. And lo! the bashful girl grows into the lovely woman; flatterers crowd round her in greater number; menials in larger swarms now await her commands; she has perhaps rivals to encounter upon the path of conquest which she has chalked out for herself, or which fond, foolish parents have bidden her to tread; and what can you expect should be the result, but that she should be proud—vain—frivolous—ignorant—vicious—revengeful, and perhaps at last morally depraved?—This indeed is but a fancy picture of a spoiled beautiful heiress; but does it not apply almost to every female in a greater or less degree, who has the advantage, or rather the curse of an elegant education and a fashionable parentage? At the same time the daughters of the commonly so-called lower classes are in many respects but little better circumstanced; since moral culture is with them also much neglected at the expense of worldly and vain acquirements.—I do not wish to say, that my observations hold universally true, but their general correctness cannot be gainsayed. All this must tend to prove that between the two extremes, between unfeminine learning and useless acquirements, the true course should be sought for. Our daughters then should learn early, even whilst yet infants, that they, as well as the other sex, are creatures and dependents of God; they too should be early told of the greatness, the mercy and the unending goodness of the Almighty; they should be taught to direct their hopes in affliction, and their confidence in prosperity to the Giver of all good;

they should be informed, that beauty is perishable, wealth is fleeting, joy evanescent, and wisdom fallacious; they should be impressed with the conviction that flattery is a pernicious gift, dangerous to the receiver; that the world will crouch and cringe to the prosperous, and turn away with disgust and loathing the confiding one whom they themselves have corrupted; above all the father should betimes commence to teach his daughter the way she should go; he should, so to say, be her guide on the road to eternal life; he should bid her look into the sacred page to gather wisdom and hope from the undying words of Holy Writ; and he should admonish her to cull the antidote to affliction from those records where it is taught to us that the virtuous are never forsaken; especially however he should inform her, how becoming is meekness, and how lovely is modesty in the beautiful woman, how much more commanding her loveliness must be, if she bears it as a gift of Heaven, not as some gaudy jewel of which the wearer may be proud.—Think you that an education based upon such principles can be otherwise than beneficial? Even if the time consumed in this training should preclude the acquisition of accomplishment: still far better will it be that our daughters grow up religious women and excellent housewives, than that they be elegant musicians, skilful painters, graceful dancers or pretenders to sciences, which to the great majority of females must be quite useless.—If time is left, if the parent's means will permit it, then some of the more showy branches might with advantage be added; but care should always be taken, that they be viewed as secondary, and that religious instruction and use-

ful solid information should be the first, the most important pursuit.—Whilst on the subject I cannot dismiss it without adding a few words as to the books which are generally considered fit for female reading; I allude to the whole class of fictitious writings, by which I mean romances, novels, and dramas. That some are good, others harmless, is not to be denied; but the majority of them contain false views of morality; a perverted philosophy, and a mawkish sensibility are generally their chief pervading characteristics; and, when, as it is often the case, the young mind has not been stored with sound religious knowledge, this kind of literature destroys almost entirely all sound principles, and it may well-nigh reduce one to the awful state on which the prophet pronounced the curse: "Wo to those who say to the good evil, and to the evil good." It were therefore far better, if the whole of such works were banished or set out of the reach of the young; but if this cannot be done, at least do teach the females, at least prepare them with that kind of information, which may act as the antidote to the poison they so plentifully imbibe.—In this manner then let us proceed in the education of our children: let religion form the basis both for males and females, on which the superstructure of useful and ornamental knowledge can afterwards be profitably built; for without the former, as has been shown, the latter can never produce good and wholesome fruits.

In reply to the other assertion, "That Israelites need not give an especial religious instruction to their children, since morality is taught in the churches of other sects, and political rectitude can be acquired in

the schools," we have simply to answer: That much good as may be taught in these places, (we would not be illiberal enough to deny this,) still much is left untaught which to us at least is highly important. The gentile preacher will admonish you to be obedient to God's will and to be pious, meek, and patient. But what are the duties he includes in obedience? They are few indeed compared to our wants; he will not tell you to observe holy the seventh day—he will not tell you to remember the going out of Egypt—not speak of the glorious announcement of the law on this holy festival—not he will inform you how to be holy, as Israel should be holy, to the Lord—not he can teach you to abstain from unlawful food—not he may direct your hopes to a future happy restoration—not he may instruct you, to sum up all in one single idea—not he can instruct you to look up to yon heaven and to behold there the workings of ONE, holy, everlasting, unchangeable Being; for to him the Deity is divided, to him the Creator is changeable. Even let him feel the beauty and the force of the idea of ONE God, does he not then inculcate that the holy law is abolished, that the law of Moses, the promulgation of which we celebrate this day—that this law has been annulled? to make place for what? for an offspring, a changeling rather, whose beauty by no means equals the parent's lustre!—But his eloquence attracts you, the powers of his capacious well-regulated mind make you willing listeners; you go, because his, as you say, is the purer morality, divested of doctrinal jargon, free from religious prejudice, open alike to all mankind.—But go ye as believers in revelation, or as listeners of an exhibition of splendid eloquence?

If the latter, it is well indeed; admire then for ever the eloquent fervour, listen to well-turned phrases, shout approbation to morality without religious restraint, without doctrines of faith, if such a thing be not an utter fallacy. Yet, if you are believers, if you are Israelites, not in words but in your inmost hearts, then you cannot be much benefitted by such advice; true, it may raise your admiration of God's power; the orator may tell you in the words of the holy Book, to adore and to love the Lord, and excite in your mind religious adoration. Still where are the instructions which are to be based upon such fervour? Do the preacher's words teach you aught thereof? or rather does he not raise a craving within you which he fails, utterly fails, to satisfy? To the house of our God then bend your steps, perchance there is one who is empowered to scatter the seeds of life, unknown to fame he may indeed be, not burning eloquence may flow from his lips, not the goods of the world may be his portion, perhaps not even beloved may he be, because he is too uncompromising, too unyielding to the follies of the age: nevertheless he teaches what our ancients taught, he promulgates the holy Word which was announced in times of yore from the blessed Sinai; and will you turn to him a deaf ear, which was willingly lent to eloquence? will you not bear with him, whilst he points out the way you should travel to insure your salvation? I hope your hearts, my brethren! may be with him who is one of you, one from the same line, from the seed of the house of Jacob; and that, feeling the necessity of religious instruction, it will be your endeavour to have always such a teacher, who will fearlessly speak

to you of the deeds you have to do and the way you have to walk, instead of resorting to places where with the wholesome water inefficient, or noxious drugs even, may perchance be mixed.

In reference at last to the assertion: "That political knowledge can be obtained at schools where worldly sciences are taught," it would be needless, after what has been said already, to do more than merely call your attention to the absurdity of the position, that political knowledge should effect the least good in reforming individual wickedness, since the whole system is based, from its very nature, upon expediency and utility.

Nothing is left, therefore, to us as Israelites, but to apply ourselves, as in olden days, to the study of the law; to engage in this pursuit with all the light which modern discoveries in science so abundantly furnish, and to do according to the knowledge we may acquire.—If it is thus our duty to learn, it is no less necessary to teach others what is so beneficial to ourselves; and if a parent should unfortunately not be well instructed himself, he is bound to seek a teacher who shall supply the place which he should have occupied. That this is ordained in the law, as much as any other religious duty, appears from the last commandment which Moses gave before his death:

ויאמר אלהם שימו לבבכם לכל הדברים אשר אנכי מעיד בכם היום אשר תצום את בניכם לשמר לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת: כי לא דבר רק הוא מכם כי הוא חייכם ובדבר הזה תאריכו ימים על האדמה אשר אתם עברים את הירדן שמה לרשתה:

דברים לב' מו'–מו':

"And he said to them, Turn your heart to all the words which I testify towards you this day, that you may command them your children, to observe to do all the words of this law. For it is not an empty thing for you, but it is your life, and through this very thing you will have length of days upon the land, which to inherit you are to pass over the Jordan." Deut. xxxii. 46–47.

Here we have clearly pointed out to us the obligation under which every Israelite lies to acquire a sufficient knowledge, be it much or be it little, of the laws of our God. Farther, it is also made a duty to teach the same to our children, that they also may learn to observe to do accordingly,—for the reason given, that it is not a matter of indifference, one to which we might attend or not, as our fancy or inclination might dictate; but to which we should resort, as the patient snatches with eagerness after the medicinal draught which, he believes, has the power to stay the outstretched arm of death. Ay, and does the sufferer eagerly follow the advice of the fallible earthly physician, whose well-intended medicaments may after all slay in place of reviving: how much more should we hasten to receive with eagerness the fruit of life, the certain remedy for our fainting soul, which the infallible Physician so graciously offers and so beneficently bestows!—This is the herb of life, this is the healing balsam which must restore life into decay, which must, to use simple language, bring back peace into the mind where even sin and excesses may for a time have caused peace and contentment to fly.—Let it then be our study to learn our duties, and let us also bestow upon our children what we have found to be so beneficial in prosperity, and so healing amidst tribulations. Then, indeed, may

parents rejoice in the number of their offspring, when they behold them all the children of righteousness, true and faithful servants of the Most High. Then, indeed, may the female rejoice in her beauty and loveliness, when she is armed against the snares and temptations of life. Then can we hail our mothers as our benefactresses, our fathers as spiritual progenitors, our sisters as our best friends, our wives as faithful companions, and our daughters as springs of hope for the future.—The brother too may not then mistrust the brother, nor will the son rebel against the father, and the husband will be the protector of his wife, and the guardian of her innocence and honour. Is this the legitimate effect of a religious education? It is! May it then be the will of Heaven to make it prosper among us, that all may be true to our Maker, and faithful to our God!

O our Father! another festival has again sped along to cause us to rejoice in thy goodness, and to bring us to pray in thy holy house. Many are the evils, Thou knowest it, O Lord! under which we labour. In thy indignation, in thy just wrath, because of our transgressions, Thou didst call unto the invader, who levelled our sanctuary to the ground. Wanderers now we are upon the face of thy earth, neither temple to journey thereunto, nor priest have we to make atonement for us. O be Thou then our sanctuary, be Thou our priest, and receive our offered prayers instead of the incense and sacrifice! Enlighten too our minds, that we may behold wonders out of thy law, which Thou didst proclaim unto our parents on this day of Pentecost, the recurrence of which we now celebrate. And may it be farther thy will to

preserve us entire in our captivity, and bless those means which thy servants take to cause the spread of a true knowledge of Thee. And do Thou display over us thy mighty arm, and let it be thy will that all nations may be brought to see thy glory, and join themselves unto those whom Thou didst call thy people, and thy first-born son, and thy treasure.—O give us life, and grant us prosperity, and hasten the approach of thy anointed, whom Thou hast promised to redeem us from captivity.—May this be thy will! Amen.

Sivan 5th. } 5595.
June 2d. }

DISCOURSE XL.

THE TRANSGRESSION OF ISRAEL.

Lord of the universe, listen to our prayer when we call on Thee, and grant us the favour of thy countenance on the day on which we approach to seek thy protection! And O, cast us not off entirely from before Thee, although we have transgressed, we and our fathers! And if we have sinned as mortals, if we have lost sight of thy holy ways as erring sons of the earth: do Thou extend thy forgiveness as it becometh thy greatness and holiness; for we know Thee as a God who pardonest iniquities, and who long withholdest thy anger, and pourest not forth thy wrath over the sinful and wayward child!—May this be thy

will, and mayest Thou ever spare us according to thy infinite mercy! Amen.

BRETHREN!

Not only in this age in which our lot is cast, but also in days gone by, men have ever been prone to follow the path of evil, and have foolishly forsaken the law of righteousness to gratify their sinful inclinations. And although it must be acknowledged that at some periods wickedness does more extensively prevail than at others: still it may be maintained, that mankind are ever the same with but trifling differences. We therefore occasionally witness an entire generation almost leading a life displeasing to Heaven; and then again, when punishment is sent, they turn and seek the Lord, and forsake the evil of their ways. The philanthropist and the adorer of his God need therefore never despair of a regeneration of their fellow beings; for even though all appear to be sinning, there always will be those who will never swerve from the service of the Creator, and through whom the others will again be led to a knowledge of the way of truth. But also universal virtue has at no time prevailed; and after centuries of adherence to religion, the march of wickedness has often marred the beautiful structure of holiness, and spread desolation over the fields, towns and temples upheld only by virtue, piety and devotion. All this has been abundantly verified by the history of our people. There had been times, during the continuance of the Hebrew commonwealth, when virtue was loved, when the law of God was honoured, and when the throng of worshippers crowded the temple at Jerusalem.

But through the folly of rulers and people a change had come by degrees over the fair scene; and in place of virtue, murder and incest were committed; in place of the law of God, heathen rites were honoured; and instead of crowds at Jerusalem, the temples of the numberless idols of Judah received the thoughtless multitude. Thus was the people circumstanced, which had once been chosen as a peculiar treasure of righteousness and sanctity, and thus far had the Israelites sunk down from their high estate. But still they vainly imagined themselves free from guilt, and they did not in their obduracy look upon their mischievous conduct as blamable. At such doings the indignation of God was kindled, and He resolved to let the punishment denounced take its natural course, that it might be accomplished what had been foretold, that the Israelites should be cast out from their delightful land, if they at any time were to disobey those precepts, through the observance of which alone they could lay claim to the lovely inheritance. Now, though the conditions had been clearly proposed, and there could be no possible doubt as to their meaning and bearing: still the merciful One delayed his just indignation, and sent his servants the prophets to warn the apostate race of the danger they were voluntarily incurring by the course they were pursuing. Our people had in former times seen and felt how great was the difference between following the will of God and disobedience to his precepts. Moreover they had before them the holy law which denounced awful visitation as a natural consequence of quitting the path of right. Still, as the threat, "And you shall be speedily lost from off

the good land which the Lord giveth to you" had remained hitherto unfulfilled, although they had defiled their lovely country by their abominations and their idolatry: our ancestors possibly imagined, that the other punishments, short of this, were events, in the ordinary course of nature, to which all nations, whether Israelites or not, are alike subject. But they heeded not, that in all occurrences of life it is the superintending Providence that rules, and that nothing, even if it be only a daily adventure, is sent without a high object from the Source of all. They thus continued to sin, till even the house of God witnessed in its sacred precincts the murder of the priest and the prophet —as though the evil day would never reach them. O blind delusion! O shortsighted sinfulness! does the Almighty not see, because his arrows do not fly instantaneously? does the Judge of all slumber, because sudden destruction overtakes not the transgressor? and cannot the Omnipotent repay iniquity to its perpetrator, solely because He mercifully delays the punishment?—Most truly, O, our God! have we experienced that, although Thou art slow of anger, thy punishment strikes home, and thy arrows sink deep into the sinful heart, and that thy vengeance is only retarded, not withheld. Yet, though so great were our misdeeds, our heavenly Father let the merited retribution take place by degrees: first, a part of the kingdom of Israel was overrun by one Assyrian king, and then the remainder was led away by his successor. In this manner was fulfilled in part the denunciations of Moses, which had been confirmed by a constant succession of inspired men, one of whom predicted (1 Kings xiv. 15): "And the Lord will

smite Israel, like the reed bendeth in the water, and He will expel Israel from off this good land, which He hath given to their fathers, and scatter them on the other side of the river, because they have made their idol-groves, incensing the Lord." Although the curse had been thus partially fulfilled, the men of Judah, it is possible, did not altogether grieve for the downfall of the rival kingdom, with which they had waged many bitter and bloody wars. Perhaps also they fancied themselves secure, because they had within their boundaries the sacred temple which God had chosen as the residence of his holy name. Perhaps too they did not conceive their transgressions to be quite so heinous as those of the Israelites, because they had occasionally repented, which the latter had never done. Thus they lulled themselves into a fatal security, and the amount of their iniquities was fearfully swelled, till they too were ripening fast for destruction.—Again the spirit was poured forth, and men arose who yet shake the world by their fervour and eloquence. They went out with the word of life on their lips, and whilst announcing the impending evil, they entreated their brothers to avert it by a speedy return to righteousness.—But they addressed deaf ears, their words fell like seed upon an unfruitful soil, upon unwilling hearts; and therefore there occurred what had been so long foretold, and down fell the glory of our nation, the crown of our head was hurled to the ground, and the bright gems were dimmed, and the pure gold was tarnished;—our temple was burned, our holy city rendered the abode of the wild beasts of the desert, and our nation scattered to the four corners of heaven, so that years rolled over

our devastated land, during which not the foot of man nor of cattle trod its desolate soil.

Long is the time since this calamity befel us, centuries have sped along in their unceasing course, and nations have sprung up and nations have passed away; and nevertheless we are yet left to mourn for the bereavement we then suffered, for never have we again risen to our pristine greatness; and though undestroyed, because indestructible, our glory and our power have at no time since attained any considerable eminence. Still we are the same that we have been in olden times, the descendants of the same illustrious race, and the inheritance of the most favoured and most pious and most devoted of men is yet in our possession; for the books of the holy inspirations, which tell us of the outpourings of the spirit which God graciously revealed to Adam's sinful progeny, have not perished amidst the troubles and afflictions which befel us. As has been said already, the Israelites fancied that they were secured from the evils which had been predicted, and consequently the banishment which had overtaken one portion of the people was not regarded as a warning by the other, and they therefore sinned, as though the dreaded future would never arrive. But all the while their evil day was drawing nigh, and the enemies of our race were already buckling on their armour for the deadly conflict against the far-famed Jerusalem. And this period so pregnant with wo was chosen by God to send another of those devoted messengers, who, among the prophets that had been deputed, was one of the greatest, and one that was indeed the man of sorrow; who, during his mission, and after the event

had so dreadfully verified the truth of the words he had spoken, suffered many and various mishaps, in the persecutions he encountered, and the evils he witnessed as befalling his beloved nation, the holy city, and the sacred temple. This man was Jeremiah, and he was told to go and to warn the people of the impending storm, that by repentance they might haply escape its outbreak. In the opening of the book of his prophecies we are presented with a succinct account of his appointment to the sacred calling of prophet, to which dignity he was raised whilst yet very young. He at first hesitated to accept the holy trust, but he was told, "Not to say, I am young; for to whithersoever I send thee thou shalt go, and whichsoever I command thee thou shalt speak; be not afraid of them; for I am with thee to save thee, saith the Lord." From this we are to learn, that it matters not what age the teacher may be, but however young or otherwise unimportant, the word of salvation must be received with becoming deference from his mouth; for it is not the man nor his glorification which is the object in view, but the end is the spread of righteousness, and the effect is the sanctification of the Creator of the universe, and this can be attained by the instrumentality of any one whom He, who is enthroned above, may select in his wisdom.—Jeremiah no longer refused to go forth, and, accepting the trust together with its dangers (for then, as now, the admonisher of the people on account of their wrongs and backslidings was not beloved) he received his mission by, to adopt the figurative language of Scripture, a touch from the Supreme Hand on his lips, or in other words, by the

infusion in him of an accession of wisdom, of knowledge, and of a higher moral courage; and the Lord said to him "Behold, I have given my words in thy mouth." Next in order follow several visions which Jeremiah saw, which as prophet he had to tell as a part of his mission to the people, and were intended to impress on their minds the intention of God to cause the threatened evil to come soon over them. They had thought themselves safe; but now it was announced that the evil was hastening to overwhelm them. God also showed to Jeremiah the northern hordes, who would sweep over the plains and mountains, and bring destruction even to the gates of Jerusalem itself—Jerusalem which then was thought too strong and too impregnable to fear the approach even of the foeman.—Having announced to the people what punishment was in store for them, he tells them, how much satisfaction God had received from their former love, when they went after Him confidingly, like the youthful bride follows the chosen of her heart, into the desert, to receive there the confirmation of the holy espousals—the law which was proclaimed from Sinai.—But now, continues the prophet, speaking in the name and the person of the Deity: "Hear ye the word of the Lord, house of Jacob, and all ye families of the house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord, What evil have your ancestors found in me, that they have distanced themselves from me, and that they went after vanities and became vain?" Here we have the folly and wickedness of the transgressors among our people placed in a strong light before us. First, we are told how much was regarded the filial devotion, and how ever-

lastingly would be remembered the submission to God's guidance. But now look upon the contrast: the very nation that had obtained Heaven's favour in so singular a manner, is the very one that forsakes Him without any cause; the very one that seeks vanity, where the opposite reality is so great, so palpable, so powerful, so wise, so good! Could they allege, that God was not so great as formerly? or does perhaps the sinner of our own day imagine, that the power of the Lord is lessened? when they must have known, and when we daily experience, that He is ever the same, and that his is the everlasting majesty! Could they aver, that the Lord spoke no more from Sinai? or will the transgressors of our time say, that the divine legislation has not been renewed before their own eyes? can this be an excuse for trespassing and sin?—But are not the effects of divine omnipotence daily manifested around us? are the light and heat of the sun ever in aught diminished? do the stars now shine with less than their wonted splendour? is the blue of heaven less intense and less beautiful? does not the nourishing earth still yield her manifold productions? do not the seasons roll on thus far in unending, unchanging, and unvarying succession?—And say! are not the wonders of revelation the same they were on the first day of their announcement? can, therefore, any one seriously say, that God is less manifest now than formerly?—And say you his power is lessened? when it is nowise diminished by age and care, when in Him succeeding centuries have not discovered aught of decay, of uncertainty of purpose, of a lack of energy; when all with Him is as from the begin-

ning, when He is unending in power and unlimited in might!—And He who is old of days and unchanging in purpose is no less wise than powerful; and since his acting vigour is unimpaired, the knowledge which is his, the wisdom which is himself, is also left unchanged. And doubt you it, when you see that daily new wisdom is brought to light? and say you, it is the inventive faculty of man which produces these wonders? But whence does wisdom come to man? say, who is it that causes his mind to swell with intelligence, unless it be He, who teaches man understanding?—Sinners, perhaps, say, God is no longer so kind as formerly He was wont to be; He beheld the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt, and He saved them; but where now are his mercies of which our fathers have spoken? But let us consider a moment and reflect what blessings we, though unworthy, daily receive, and we will cease to complain; true, we linger in captivity, as also did a portion of Israel at the time of Jeremiah; but then are not our sins and our ancestors' sins the division between our God and ourselves? where is the repentance, the return to righteousness, which has been asked at our hands? when did we ever go back again to the Lord in sincerity and truth?—Oh no, He is always the same, ever great, ever manifest, ever powerful, ever wise, ever good; but we do as the prophet says: "And when I brought you into the land of Carmel to eat of its fruits and good products, you came and made unclean my land, and my inheritance ye rendered an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the Lord; those that laid hold of the law did not know me; the shepherds rebelled against

me; and the prophets prophesied by Baal; and after that which cannot help they went." Is this not true, ay, even to this very day, of many of us, I fear to say, of most of us? is there not, therefore, cause enough for the anger of God which was once poured out to continue its action on us, or as the Bible says, "Therefore, yet will I strive with you, saith the Lord, and with the children of your children will I strive?" Yes, we alone are the cause that God's favour is not bestowed on us, we are indeed the obstinate, obdurate generation, whose eyes are blinded to the effects of our misdeeds; we sin, and then arraign the Supreme's goodness for applying the merited chastisement.—And if this was true in Jeremiah's time, it is not the less so at this very hour. How little regard is paid to the dictates of the law! every one, alas! forms a code for himself, he does, as it were, set up an idol of his own, to which he pays his homage. One worships his money, and to it he sacrifices the eternal repose of his neglected soul. To him no Sabbath bids the weekly rest to come; to him no holy days of the Lord are days of rejoicing; the period of atonement for sins is to him like all others, a season for the pursuit of vile lucre; and often honesty and probity are made cloaks, only assumed to hide his turpitude, which the laws of the land would signally punish, if his real acts were discovered.—Another is a sensualist, and what are to him the precepts which inculcate holiness and chastity? even into the house of God he goes benumbed by the intoxicating drink which he loves; even in midnight hours he seeks to gratify his lust, and for the sake of pleasing his palate he will devour whatever the law of God has inter-

dicted to us.—Again, one is ambitious of rising to distinction in a world which loves not Israel and their institutions; at least he fancies so; and behold his twisting and turning to assimilate himself to the world at large; see what pains he takes to convince others, perhaps himself, that the name of Jew is hateful to him; see how eagerly he catches at the small favours which the gentiles are graciously pleased to bestow on him, like the thankful dog that licks his master's hand for a useless bone or a wasted crum, thrown into his expectant, hungry mouth: and straightway this would-be-great one withholds circumcision from his sons; induces his daughters, under foreign guidance, into the mysteries of a divided deity; he proclaims his regret that he was born a Jew, if his birth is known, and if not, he carefully conceals his origin, and at length, to use again the Scripture words, "And they mingled among the nations and they learned of their ways;" or he, perhaps, forsakes altogether the hopes of his infancy and the trust of his maturer years, and he renounces, O horrible thought! his hopes in heaven and his belief in the all-wise, true and only ONE God and everlasting Creator, and he sells his soul to damnation, and his name for a curse and a byword for the purpose of obtaining worldly fame, for a renown which when obtained is not worth the possession, and may prove a burden and a hindrance to him, even before his days are closed on earth!—And says the prophet concerning conduct similar to that just exhibited:

שמו שמים על זאת ושערו חרבו מאד נאם ה׳: כי

שתים רעות עשה עמי אתי עזבו מקור מים חיים לחצב
להם בארת בארת נשברים אשר לא יכילו המים :
ירמ׳ ב׳ יב׳–יג׳

"Be astounded at this, ye heavens, and shudder! they are very much corrupted, saith the Lord. For two evils my people have done,—me they have forsaken, the spring of living waters, to hew themselves cisterns, cisterns that are broken, which cannot hold the water." Jeremiah ii. 12, 13.

This was spoken but a short time, not fifty years, before the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The people indeed had become very corrupt; gross idolatry was the disgrace of our people; on every hill, under every green tree idols were seen, to which they senselessly offered adoration; but though their folly was proved to them, they still continued to defile themselves, not heeding the voice which so feelingly called to them to consider the folly of their way, in "saying to the wood, Thou art my father, and to the stone, Thou hast borne us." But, alas! the messengers of God remained unheeded, their advice was listened to only to be contemned; for at that time already there were not wanting those who looked upon the really wise, the servants of God, as fanatics and bigots. But at length the evil, the advent of which was not believed, came and swept away wall and temple, city and people, priests and judges; and then was seen the slaughter of the mother upon her babes, and of the father upon his children, and together lay slain the teacher with his scholars, and the bride and the bridegroom; and there arose the shouts of assailants and the groans of the vanquished, and in the prostrate ruins of God's house were heard

the hated voice of the triumph of the adversary, as he strode conquering and rejoicing over the desolation which his arms had been permitted to achieve. —Hah! dreadful indeed was that day, when the glory of Israel sunk, when the sun of our prosperity set in a sea of blood. True, the temple was once more rebuilt, and again a remnant was permitted to reoccupy the sacred soil; but a second time also, the terrible scenes were reënacted with more heightened effect, and the slaughter was tenfold increased under the command of the Roman Vespasian and his son Titus, since when we have been wanderers, and an easy and ready prey to any one who chose to persecute us.— All this was caused by our sins, because we would not listen to the warning voice of instruction, which would fain have arrested our steps on the road of ruin. Our ancestors, however, were obdurate, and our present state is an evidence of their folly and wickedness.

It is now the period in which the calamitous subversion of our state twice occurred; O let it act as a wholesome check to our own obduracy, and let us reflect, that we too are sinning, and hewing out for ourselves cisterns which will not hold the living waters. Ay, heap up wealth in masses, avaricious one,—still thou hast not laid up imperishable treasures; thy cistern is a broken cistern, and not a drop of the water of life will remain in it, unless the breach is healed by a recourse to the holy law. Sensual one, weenest thou that thy tasting of all pleasures will avail thee aught at the final day of judgment? sinful man! no, thy birthright thou hast sold for a mess of pottage; and when thy doom is sealed thou wilt thyself acknowledge, that thy cistern has been a broken one,

and that it held not the living waters!—And thou too, man of ambition, of worldly vain-glory, seest thou not that thy worship was the worship of a false delusive idol? worldly honour thou didst crave, and thou didst not hesitate in thereby offending Him who has given thee life and wisdom. Go meet, then, thy doom, and teach by thy example and misery, that those who forsake the Lord and his law have hewn themselves broken cisterns which hold not the living waters.—Brethren! seed of Jacob! children of Israel! open your hearts to the instruction which God has vouchsafed to you; and O! let it be your endeavour to deserve, by serving Him in truth, a return of his favour; and feel and know, that only through obedience can we Israelites be happy, and only through adherence to the law can we deserve God's kindness and protection.

O Thou! who art ever the Guardian of Israel, shield us by thy protecting wings, and watch over us, lest the nations swallow us up in their wrath. We know that we have sinned, but do Thou, O merciful God! prove to us thy superabundant kindness, and judge us not according to our misdeeds, but according to thy mercy, which is unending. And may it be thy will to revisit our captivity, and number us like the shepherd numbers his flock, that not one of them may escape his tender care, and lift up thy hand a second time to restore the remnant of thy people which has escaped to thy holy mountain, there to worship Thee for ever. Amen.

Tamuz 26th. } 5595.
July 23d. }

DISCOURSE XLI.

THE INSTITUTION OF PRAYER.

O OUR GOD and Father! hearken to our prayers, and listen to the supplications which we pour out before Thee. And O grant us thy forgiveness on that fearful day which Thou hast appointed as the time of judgment for thy creatures; and when Thou siftest our deeds and probest our transgressions, mayest Thou say: "I will redeem them from going to destruction, I have found a redemption." May this be thy will. Amen

BRETHREN!

The season has again arrived when the descendants of Israel, who have but a spark of the holy fire left unquenched within their bosoms, will hasten to the house of prayer to offer up their devotion to their God. And sweet indeed is the incense thus sacrificed on the altars of our Father, and truly grateful in the Supreme Presence is the odour of such offerings; for the humble outpourings of the heart that knows its weakness will never be despised by the Disposer of human destinies. But prayer to be acceptable, to be a truly agreeable offering, should be prompted by holy feelings, and be based upon a knowledge of our unworthiness and the acknowledgment of the evil of our ways. Many a one may enter these walls, many a one may utter his orisons, but his heart may be far

away, wandering after his worldly pursuits, and whilst his lips are praying, his thoughts may be engaged in speculating on objects of pecuniary gain and interested in matters far from appertaining to the worship of God. Many persons praying, or rather assembling under such disadvantageous and ungodly circumstances, there actually are, and it is therefore necessary that we should endeavour to find out the proper feelings, which ought to accompany us to the house of God. To come to a correct understanding on this point, we must consider; first, to *whom* we pray; secondly, for *what cause* we pray, and lastly, what is to be *effected* by our prayers.

Well has one of our wise men said: דע לפני מי אתה עומד "Know before whom thou art standing." In this simple sentence we are reminded, that our Hearer is not an ignorant man who understands not our words, who knows not our wants; not a wise man who may be deceived by our superior cunning, or circumvented by our appearance; not even a mighty potentate who may not be able by the insufficiency of his power to grant all our requests; but it is our God, who fully comprehends our words, and is acquainted with our wants, ay, even before our lips give utterance to them. He is also wise, it is beyond our cunning to deceive Him, and no assumed appearance, however ingeniously contrived, can impose on his credulity; for to Him who is all-seeing the inmost recesses of thought are laid open, and He knows the secret motives of the most mysterious action perpetrated in the darkest corner, the farthest removed from all human ken. And at last his power is unbounded, and we need not fear in Him any inadequacy or inability to comply

with our demands, if they are consonant with our ultimate good; and as his power is unlimited by time or circumstances, we need not fear that our prayer has not been answered, because our request is not immediately granted; for since God is not less good than wise and powerful, we should consider that our petition may be granted at a period remote from the present, when it may redound more to our advantage and the repose of our soul. If now we come to pay our adorations, it is obviously our first duty to remove all deceit and duplicity from our heart; to endeavour to be fully impressed with the conviction, that nothing but undivided sincerity will avail us, since by no possibility can we hope to deceive God. Secondly, to come with humble confidence in our Father, and not be deterred by the magnitude of our wants, nor by the unworthiness of ourselves, from laying our desires open to Him. And lastly, to wait with becoming hope and resignation the fulfilment of our petition, not to be depressed at finding ourselves rejected for a brief space; nor to be elated with pride when we witness the accomplishment of our wishes; nor may we be looking upon ourselves as righteous beyond our neighbours, because our prayer has been answered. But we should consider that, if our wishes are *not* done, we in our ignorance have perhaps desired that which, if granted, would be hurtful to us, and that perhaps our previous sins have deprived us of the asked-for advantage. In either of these cases, we should endeavour to amend our course and watch our own feelings narrowly, to seek out the error which will at length, upon an honest investigation, be discovered in ourselves. In case, however, that our

petition is granted, it would be ridiculous in the extreme, if, because God has been kind and merciful to us, we should therefore wax proud in our hearts and look upon others with contempt; since this indeed would at once prove that we are absolutely unworthy of the favour of God. For if we fairly examine our course of life, and reflect how often we have vexed God by our sinfulness, and how often we have been remiss or lukewarm in the practice of the righteousness demanded at our hands: we will surely have no cause to elevate ourselves above our neighbours, who, if even acknowledgedly more wicked than we, may not have had the opportunities for improvement nor the benefits of a holy example which to enjoy may have been our happy lot.

Whenever then we go to pour out our heart in prayer, it should be done with a sincere confidence on the unlimited bounty of God, and with a firm reliance that whatever He may vouchsafe to decree, *that* alone is the best and most conducive to our own welfare and the happiness of others. And in this spirit our wise men relate, that the high-priest during his annual officiating in the holy of holies prayed, that "the petition of wayfarers may not be listened to, to stay the blessings of the descending rain when the world is in need thereof," for to grant the request of such an individual thus praying would be to the detriment and injury of the many. It is therefore not acting in the spirit of becoming deference, if the petitioner comes to the throne of Grace with a long recital of his own merits; for let a man observe ever so many Sabbaths, let his charity be ever so unbounded, let his philanthropy indeed cheer up the countenance

of all that suffer: still all these virtues and many others superadded cannot, should not make an erring mortal think, that now his claims to divine grace are established on so firm a footing, that he may ask in a tone of authority, or appeal with a confidence of assured success. If one prays in such a spirit of arrogance, he deserves not that He that answereth prayers should vouchsafe to him his request; since the first requisites towards obtaining grace, humility and devotion, are supplanted by pride and arrogance. And in this, as in many other points, we have a beautiful example of piety set us by our great teacher, who was indeed the shining light and the guiding star sent to lead a newly redeemed people to a happiness which should not be merely temporal and confined to one spot, but lasting and universal; and thus though the land of Palestine, our temporal inheritance, has been rendered desolate, though Jerusalem our holy city is now surrounded with wastes and ruins: yet the law is not wrested from us, and the examples of holiness and piety it contains flow continually into our souls to refresh and invigorate them, like the meadow stream which meanders along through grassy banks and shady groves, fertilizing the soil in its course, which otherwise would be barren and dreary. In Moses's own family there was affliction; his brother and sister, they who had been associated with him in the holy work of redeeming their fellow-believers, had sinned against him their brother and teacher, and God, incensed at their misconduct, and ever acting up to that great principle, that the greater the piety of an individual the more strictly will also be the retribution to which he will be held, punished

Miriam with leprosy, that loathsome disease, which caused the infected to be removed out of the community of Israel and compelled them to live in solitude. Seeing his sister's affliction, Moses did not remind God of the many acts of devotion, nor of the many good works wrought by him; but he called simply in the most humble and confiding manner on the Healer of the sick to grant her relief, saying: "O God! I pray thee, do thou heal her." You will observe, brethren, that these few words, including every thing which was needed, presented without parade or ostentation, were graciously received, and the leper was healed after a probation of seven days had elapsed. An example from so high a source should not be without its effect upon us, and as Moses did, so should we also do; in whatever trouble and sorrow we may be plunged, whatever joy may elevate our hearts, we should resort in all humility, free from pride and arrogance, either to lay our wants in sincerity before God, or to offer Him our thanks with heartfelt gratitude. And if we approach the Lord in this manner, as children that come before their father, we need not tremble at the immeasurable distance which divides us from the Most High; we need not then be struck with fear, because we are sinful and He is great; but we may be comforted with the assurance that our offering will be received and our supplication listened to with favour, for He the Ruler and Preserver of all things feels for, and cares for, all his creatures, from the greatest to the lowest.

Next let us consider the second question proposed: "For what cause shall we pray?" It must be evident to every one endowed with common sense, that there

are many circumstances and occurrences in life, where all human agency is incapable of rendering us the least service. There are moments, when the heart is full to overflowing with joy or with sorrow, when we are in danger, either of being corrupted by pride, or of sinking into the slough of despair. Ay, there are seasons, when we would shun to confide to any human ear what rests heavily on our mind, when we are disgusted, satiated with things of evanescent life, when we are wearied with the same dull round of care and labour which constantly oppresses us, and when the sight of a fellow-mortal becomes almost loathing, and when the words of encouragement, of censure, or of praise will fall on our ears like the rattling of the bones of some suspended malefactor, hateful beyond endurance. Again there are times, when we are forsaken by all the world, when for foul suspicion we are cast into a dungeon, exposed to a public trial, condemned to an ignominious punishment, and left to pine in solitude, vainly recurring to our former life, and regretting too late that we gave way to temptations, when an opposite course might have given us comfort and prosperity.—The child too may follow to the tomb the remains of his last beloved parent; the father may weep over the early bier of his only offspring, and the husband may mourn over the grave of the dearly-beloved and early-called wife of his bosom: who is there among men that can speak consolation to them—what on earth is there to bid their hearts rejoice, they, to whom all around is gloom and despair? And even heap riches up for either: and the son will tell you that yonder grave hides the guide of his youth, the

friend of his infancy, and the author of his existence. And the father's only hope, the stay of his old age, is closed up in the cold earth, and he heeds not the world's greatness, because *he* is no more!—The husband has lost her, who was to him dearer than life, the mother of his children, the partner of his joys and of his sorrows, her, with whom he vainly hoped to pass down the vale of life in harmony and concert; and her, the life of his life, death has snatched from him in the bloom of youth and usefulness.—In all such instances it should be our duty to resort to prayer, either to unburden ourselves of the load which oppresses us in the presence of Him, who can alone remove the weight, or to give vent to our surcharged feelings and ask consolation and assistance of the Lord of consolations and the Saviour of mankind.—When the measure of thy joy has suddenly become filled to excess, when thy giddy brain refuses to bear with meekness the exuberance of the blessings received, O mortal man! hie thee to the house of God, and sacrifice there to Him thy thanks, and humble thyself at his feet, and reflect that He who gave thee joy can take away again the gift He has bestowed; and thou wilt return to thy dwelling with the peace of God within thee, filled with humility and lowliness because of thy perishable greatness, and imbued with love and kindness towards all, who like thee are inhabitants of the mortal clayey dwellings.—If thou art wearied with the cares of life, if the burden of existence has become too heavy for thee: seek again relief from thy God. Reflect that it is thy destined appointment to earn thy bread with the sweat of thy face, and that thy lot is not heavier than that

of others, since no one, however exalted, is free from care and sorrow. And if this reflection fails to give thee comfort, then forget all thy dissatisfaction and lay open thy heart to thy Maker, ask of Him for strength and support: and surely thy prayer will be answered, and thy toil will be lightened, and thy burden will be eased; and thou wilt again mix with the cheerful groups of associates, and smile with the smiling, shed a tear of sympathy with the afflicted, feel a new interest in life, and gladly do those duties which the station assigned to thee may demand at thy hands. The spirit of despondency will then fly away, and the gloom of despair will vanish; and the fields will smile again in verdure clad, the blithesome song of the feathered minstrels will again sound sweetly, the flowers will again send forth their odours; and reconciled to thyself and nature, thou wilt thank God, who has through darkness led thee to feel the more strongly his love and power.

Thou! who languishest in captivity, imagine not that thy hope has fled for ever. No—sinner though thou art, forsaken though thou deemest thyself, though a prison holds thy fettered limbs: there is One above that watches, that cares for thee. "He slumbereth not and He sleepeth not," says the holy singer, "the guardian of Israel," and He who so bounteously cares for all his creatures has not forgotten thee, the captive and forlorn. O lift but thy obdurate heart to Him! O cease but thy vain repining, let but a holy hope invigorate thy heart: and instantaneously will enlargement come to thee even in thy captivity; and the sunbeam which lights up thy narrow cell will teach thee, that the light of heaven is not yet quenched,

that the goodness of the Creator is not ended, although thou for thy crimes are doomed to suffer. If thus thou thinkest, thy captivity will be a blessing to thee; since it has rescued thee from the grasp of sin, and united thee again to thy God and Lord.—And if thou art suffering innocently, if thou languishest for the glorification of the holy Name, if heathens in their triumph punish thee, because thou refusest to join their unhallowed rites: then surely thou mayest feel comfort in the knowledge that the God for whose law's sake thou sufferest, will number thy tears, so that not one of them shall be forgotten, and He will treasure them up in his receptacle, and will cleanse thy soul, and purify thy heart, till thou at the end of days wilt shine forth among the righteous ones, with the effulgence of the stars for ever more.

And thou son! who mournest for thy father—parent! who complainest because thy only one is taken—husband! who bewailest a beloved wife, all ye come hither to the temple of our heavenly Father. Ye lament the loss of earthly friends, friends deservedly dear, deservedly valued; but reflect who it is that decreed their doom! Our frame being constituted mortal it results that our bodies must be given to decay, our flesh must again be changed to the dust; "for dust we are and to dust we must return." Can we ward off the shafts which are constantly flying? Is there not a period set to our days? What matters it then, whether a few brief years more or less have been assigned to us, provided we do our duty as men, and endeavour to deserve the favour of our Maker? Since, therefore, death is inevitable, it is necessary that friends must always be prepared to meet with

becoming resignation the day when their connexion must be severed for a period, a period I say, for a reunion must take place before many years have completed their course. Instead therefore of lamentations carried to a sinful excess, ye should reflect that God took away your relatives, because their task was done; and you should only hope that they now enjoy rest and happiness in the presence of their Maker. And in place of repining, pray fervently that strength may be given you that you also may live in piety and holiness; so that when your course too is ended, you also may meet in yonder life with that beatitude which, it is to be hoped, God has already decreed to those who were so dear to you. If you act and pray thus, you will be resigned to the decrees of Him, all whose ways are just, and you will cease to complain of your hard fate, which is at best but the common portion of humanity.—In short, upon every occasion, where we may require heavenly counsel or heavenly assistance, we should resort to prayer, and express fearlessly, with a sincere outpouring of the spirit, whatever we stand in need of. This also we are taught in the first book of Kings, viii. 38–40:

כל תפלה כל תחנה אשר תהיה לכל האדם לכל עמך ישראל אשר ידעון איש נגע לבבו ופרש כפיו אל הבית הזה: ואתה תשמע השמים מכון שבתך וסלחת ועשית ונתת לאיש ככל דרכיו אשר תדע את לבבו כי אתה ידעת לבדך את לבב כל בני האדם: למען יראוך כל הימים אשר הם חיים על פני האדמה אשר נתתה לאבתינו: מלכים א' ח' לה'–מ':

"Every prayer and every supplication which any man may make

of all thy people Israel, who may know each the affliction of his heart, and spread out his hands to this house; and do Thou hear in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do to each man according to his ways, inasmuch as Thou knowest his heart; for Thou alone knowest the heart of all the children of man. In order that they may fear Thee all the days which they live upon the land, which Thou hast given to our fathers."

In this beautiful extract from the fervid prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple we have a brief elucidation of the whole object and scope of prayer; for here he lays down with the utmost precision, that every man, no matter how heavy his guilt or affliction may be, provided the heart be sincere, should come and prostrate himself before God, spread out his hands as it were towards the temple, and ask for whatever his case demands from Him who promised to let his glory dwell among us. And even to this day "it is to the East that the Hebrew bends," it is in the direction of that holy temple from which our sins have caused us to wander, that we direct our face during our prayers, and in this manner we contribute to keep alive within our bosom the sacred flame, which yet burns with a yearning towards those hallowed fields and those venerated shrines from which we have been driven. Let it then be our endeavour to call for assistance on Him, who is able to assist us amidst every danger and to rescue us from all tribulations. And every morning too, and when the sun is bending his face towards the west, and every evening when the glorious light of day has set, and every night before we seek our couch, let us pour out our orisons before our heavenly Father, and let us at every hour, at every period of our life, con-

stantly thank Him for the many favours He has so graciously bestowed.

The third part of our subject, "What is to be effected by our prayers?" now demands our consideration.—Persons may ask: "What need has God of our prayers, when He is assuredly acquainted with our wants before we express them in words!" No one more cheerfully acknowledges God's all-pervading omniscience than we do: still it must be admitted that prayer is necessary, not (as may be erroneously supposed) to inform God, but to impress on our *own* mind our dependence, yes our entire dependence for every comfort and blessing we enjoy. Worldly men are but too apt to think much of their own power, as though their strong arm were enough for them, and they accordingly never or but rarely pray; for in effect they think themselves placed beyond the necessity of asking assistance from God: hence too they are proud, vain, selfish, and self-sufficient. But suddenly their evil day comes, and their riches take unto themselves wings and fly away; the number of their children is diminished by death; and then their intellect is often reduced to madness, and they present a striking example of what man is when God's protection is withdrawn. But the humble and meek, who daily resort to a communion with the invisible Power that surrounds all, who express in words the filial confidence they really feel, are truly, and in every sense of the words, removed beyond the chances and changes of life. To them even in misfortunes and sufferings there are peace and enjoyment, and the world may exhaust its malice against them, without disturbing the sacred trust they feel in Heaven. Besides, the

Bible does teach us, that God grants the prayers of his adorers. Now, though He is not made more conscious of our wants than He was before we prayed: still we must look upon prayer as we do upon any other virtuous act, which is to be performed for the sake of making ourselves worthy of the favour of God.—If we go to pray for any calamity, or in any tribulation, or in any impending danger, it is obviously necessary that we must look into our own hearts to see if all is right there, and we must examine our conduct both past and present to observe whether or not sin and corruption lurk there as the parents of evil. In this manner we take God to witness, so to say, that we wish his protection, in consequence of which we prepare ourselves to become his servants more intimately than we have been hitherto. Now, God does not need our words to satisfy Him of our intentions, but we need it; the heart to feel truly should clothe its thoughts in words, this makes the impression more lasting, it fixes the more strongly the reformation that is once begun; and who knows but that the Almighty may do according to all that we ask, when He perceives that, by preparing ourselves truly for prayer, we have changed for the better, and now abhor the evil which we formerly loved? No wonder need therefore be expressed that the Omniscient has told his people to pray to Him and to call on his holy Name; He asks for a devotional spirit, for pure and elevated thought, and as a reward for such a petition He promises to relent (to use human expressions, since even of the holiest things we must speak as men do) from the intended evil; not as though He, the unchangeable One, had altered his

purpose, but because man has himself rescinded the evil, menaced for his misconduct, by a change of his deeds, and has thus secured an alteration of his fate, a reversion from the curses to the blessings. Just as at the making of the golden calf God did not utterly destroy the Israelites, because Moses prayed, and because there were yet multitudes left who had never swerved from the righteous path, and had remained true when many went astray. O brethren, let this lesson not be lost upon you; return to the Lord with prayer like the men of Nineveh, and God may revoke the evil, and you may not perish. The season of repentance is at hand! soon will the sound of the shophar announce in all the assemblies of the remnant of Israel that the New Year has arrived, that we have again lived to commence a new season from the creation of the world. How many hours of anguish have passed over our heads in the year that has passed and gone; how many bitter tears have flowed to the memory of the departed; how many sighs have been heaved over fortunes lost, over riches foolishly squandered; how many hours of regret have we purchased unto ourselves by our forgetfulness of the Lord's behests, commanded to our ancestors! And shall the season of prayer pass away, and not one of us return to the bosom of the great Father whom we have fatigued, as the prophet says, by our works? shall all the admonitions have been vouchsafed, and still our hearts remain obdurate? shall the day never come when the sinners will seek again the fold from which they have strayed? Let us hope, at least, for better things, and let us trust that many will come to join the band of brethren who have yet the fear of God

in their hearts, and that the number of worshippers may be increased a thousand-fold, who all may know before whom they pray, who pray to the Lord in their affliction, and who are drawn closer to Him every time their mouth utters the praise of God. Let then all Israel listen with fear to the voice of the cornet when it sounds like the alarum through the land, let it rouse them to exertion in behalf of their souls; so that, universal piety prevailing, we all may live to behold the banner raised on the mountains, when the glorious Messiah comes to spread good-will and holiness over the surface of all the earth.

Hearer of prayer! to Thee all flesh cometh. O grant Thou our desire, and raise up to us teachers of righteousness in whose mouth thy word may dwell, that they may teach thy people of thy ways. Teach them what they shall say, make them understand what they shall speak, that they may communicate to others of thy children the holy love that burns within them. And grant to all thy adorers, be they wise or foolish, great or humble, thy blessing, and inscribe all in the book of life, when Thou approachest to judge the children of men, the creatures of thy hand. Be this thy will, and may the words of our mouth and the thoughts of our hearts, be acceptable before Thee, O our Rock and Redeemer! Amen.

Elul 24th.
Sept. 18th. } 5595.

DISCOURSE XLII.

CAUSES AND REMEDIES OF SIN.

Sovereign of the universe! in order to adore Thee, we thy children have assembled to call on Thee, our Father and King. O hear Thou in Heaven, thy dwelling-place, and forgive our iniquities, as Thou hast pardoned them even from Egypt to this day. And if our sins be crying for punishment, remember Thou then the words Thou hast spoken through thy messenger: "If your sins be like scarlet they shall become white like snow, and if they be red like crimson they shall be like wool." Remember too that we are mortal, prone, and inclined to sin; and if we have given way to temptations, if we have yielded to the unholy impulse of our passions: wipe Thou away the stain of guilt from our souls, and purify us in thy kindness and in mercy; so that we may walk acceptably before Thee and be guided by thy wisdom. Amen.

Brethren!

When we look upon one of the outcasts of human society, made outcast by his own folly and crime: we, who have not yet sunk so far, must wonder, how one, who like us bears the impress of God's image on his countenance, could become so miserably degraded. It is to us incomprehensible, how any one can feel the least joy in wallowing drunk in the mire; how

any one, calling himself the father of a family, could stake his last shilling at the gaming-table; how the husband could leave his chosen wife, the mother of his children, to riot in the embrace of a wanton; how any one at all imbued with reason, could forswear his God, and doubt in the existence of the Creator. In short, the utter degradation by crime, displayed in all its horrors before us, is a spectacle not alone revolting, but of astonishment also; since with ever so humble an opinion of ourselves, with ever so much charity and indulgence towards human failings and frailties, we cannot avoid looking upon ourselves with some satisfaction that we are not degraded like those sinners. But whilst we experience this feeling, it should be mingled with thankfulness to God, for having preserved us from temptations, and given us strength to withstand the allurements by which others fell; for though nothing is more established than that every one must make the *beginning* to be good, still it is equally certain, that divine assistance is afforded to whomever makes the beginning, in the words of our sages: הבא לטהר מסייעין לו מן השמים "He that comes to purify himself will be assisted from Heaven." If we view the grievous sinners in this light, our abhorrence for their actions will not be coupled with pride, and their fall will in truth be a warning to us, that we may avoid sinning as they have done. For when we come to look into the history of the persons exhibited above, we must be soon convinced that they were born as virtuously as we have been, with just the same feelings, passions, and propensities, besides which it is very often the case that their and our education have been pre-

cisely alike, at least to outward appearances. It may also be taken for granted, I would almost venture to say as an established maxim in morals, that no man becomes suddenly wicked. The question then for us to ponder on is: "How have these men become so lost to all sense of duty?" There are two ways at least in which the mystery can be solved. First, it may be a *defect* in education, which in being of the outward kind may leave the heart unimproved, and expose it thus to be ensnared by the power of sin. Let us suppose an example: There was a man, who in his childhood was instructed in accomplishments, in arts, and in sciences, but the law of God was not impressed on his soul. As a boy he was left to his uncontrolled will, and his inclinations had not the curb of restraint laid on them. His passions showed themselves in petty tyranny over his fellows; but he went unwhipped of the rod of a father's correction. He next grew up to manhood's years; but the homage his talents justly received from the world was by no means calculated to lessen the opinion he entertained of his own importance. His arrogance was even nourished, at seeing others, whom common parlance stigmatized as of inferior birth and meaner grade in life, endeavouring to outstrip or rival him in the path of preferment. Do you think that he could have been left uncontaminated in moral conduct, while his feelings and sentiments had become gradually vitiated? Is it likely that no crime, however secret and well covered, or that no act of disobedience to parental authority and the divine will had been committed? It would be over charitable to suppose a favourable reply possible. But even

assume that all hitherto had been right within, yet it is certain that an outward morality without a holy conviction, and withal undermined by pride, could be no safeguard against temptation. And lo! an offence against his dignity was committed, say one of his friends or himself should have been publicly insulted: and he, unguarded and corrupted in mind, seized the weapon of deadly strife, and his guilty hand was imbrued and dyed red in a brother's blood. —You say, perhaps, that one so guilty from such a cause is a mere fiction; alas, no, brethren! the examples of the dreadful reality are but too common, and many a family now mourns over their blighted hopes brought about by the indulgence of unguarded and unchecked anger, vented in murder and homicide.— Let us take another case, not one for which the angry Judge above would demand, "Where is thy brother," and condemn one whom the innocent blood crying from the polluted earth accuses; but of an infatuated voluptuary, a devotee to pleasure, who is ruining his health and happiness upon the path he has chosen to tread. Again, let us suppose him to belong to the better classes, a man of education and refinement, endowed with reason of a higher degree, and in possession of wealth and power. Of course all these advantages tend to give him a certain importance in the eyes of society as well as in his own. And should he, the man of refinement, of intellect, of renown, of wealth, and of standing, submit to be controlled by antiquated statutes by which the unlettered peasant is governed? should he consent to belong to the common herd of commonplace moral people, who fear God as their fathers have done before them?

Not so can our genius act; and behold! he runs riot in his excitements, in his pursuits of novelty and enjoyment, and he falls deeper and deeper into moral debasement, and he grows cloyed with tasting the high-seasoned food his appetite has so long craved, and he perhaps leaves his once-loved home, a voluntary exile, and his heart becomes soured to all approaches of humane feelings, and he sinks, a prey to the gnawing of an overloaded conscience and the oppression of a heart destroyed by remorse, into an early and untimely grave, a dire monument of the effects of unregulated passions, and desires uncurbed by religion and morality.—In the two instances here exhibited, we have seen how a disregard to the inculcation of sound religious and moral principles in childhood may cause many noble souls to be lost, by leaving them unguarded against the approach of sin, or rather by removing all defences by which the enemy can be warded off.—It must be apparent that sinning even to degradation in such cases is a result to be expected, and in place of wondering that so many become lost, it is very remarkable how any one in such circumstances ever escapes the contamination. —Besides those of the gifted and higher classes, the uneducated and poor are no less subject, under similar conditions, to enormities only varied in shape, nature, and appearance by the difference of station and opportunity; and in truth our daily experience proves, how much and how awfully responsible parents, particularly of the humbler classes, must be to God for the neglect which they suffer their children to experience in not attending to, and watching over, and curbing the first outbreakings of the evil pas-

sions. It were easy to pourtray to you a poor man, who might have been an ornament to his station, but has become degraded from similar causes, only acting in a different manner, which we have shown to be so pernicious in the wise and wealthy; but it is needless to fatigue your patience by detaining you with a recital of examples which, alas! are so numerous that any one of the least experience must be acquainted with many.

A *second* reason of moral debasement may be found in the carelessness with which we are apt to watch ourselves; and unfortunately from this cause proceeds the ruin of many a noble mind from whose former course of life, and from whose previous training better results might have been expected. As the world is constituted, we are always surrounded by temptations in a greater or less degree, and in combatting these successfully consists the duty of our life. But how many do fail in this! how many yield, totter, and stumble! how few who remain steadfast, undismayed, and unblinded by the manifold allurements! True, no one becomes depraved from yielding to the first temptation; but the road to evil has certainly been trod, and the downward path has been made more pleasing, at least less abhorrent to the imagination.—Imagine a man that has for years been sober and abstemious in his habits; hitherto his life has been one of ease and comfort, his children have grown up around him in strength and beauty, and he is called among the happy, one of the happiest; but human prosperity is not everlasting; and his evil hour also has arrived; his wealth has become impaired by unfortunate speculations, or some other

evil befals him which to him is grievous to bear; he has heard that wine drowns sorrow, and he resorts to it for relief as a trial; he stupifies his brain into temporary forgetfulness by the enemy he puts into his mouth that robs him of his reason. But anon, he awakes, he feels perhaps degraded at his weakness, and finds his sorrow more agonizing than before; a deeper potation will be the next step, and his inebriety will be of longer duration; till by degrees, seeing his misery increasing, his health waning, he resorts to drink as his sole comforter, imagining that his greatest enemy, the chief promoter perhaps of his sorrow, the consummator of his sufferings, could be the healing balm which his wounded spirit demands: and you at length see him the outcast, wallowing in the mire, a disgrace, a spectacle, a byword, when he might have been, as he once was, an example of abstinence, of virtue, and of piety! Do I exaggerate?—Alas, no! the annals of degradation speak also of examples like this too numerous for the happiness and welfare of society!

Yonder father of a family spends his nights in some obscure quarter of the town, serving the demon of avarice to win other men's substance by the turn of the dice! Horrid spectacle! see the fumes of dissipation rising from every corner of the apartment! behold the tables spread with inviting food, with intoxicating drink! and watch well the countenances of the assembly; see their demoniac looks, their faces distorted by vile passions and hateful avarice, how they watch the event of the game with eager, with expectant gestures; and now the chance has decided, a fortune has been lost and won, and he, the man

who was once happy at his own fireside, is reduced to absolute beggary, and, when he returns home, he cannot give his children bread, when they cry in their hunger. And yet he was not always vicious! In an evil hour he was allured to the fatal spot to become a spectator of the sins of others; he staked a trifle, it mattered not to him whether he lost or won; he won, became excited at play, doubled, trebled his stake, won again, and his brain whirled round at the prospect of so suddenly, and with so little labour, increasing his fortune; another night again witnessed his presence in the sinful assembly, and his renewed rage for gold, for unholy lucre—shall I pursue the gambler farther? no, the picture becomes too disgusting, in short, his sinning is complete—and the last scene we have described! he leaves the house, where he hoped to become wealthy and overloaded with treasure, a houseless beggar, an outcast, a ruined gambler!

Another man has walked in the fear of his God from infancy; a virtuous mother early implanted in his tender bosom the seeds of piety; beautiful also were the fruits they bore, and he was known among his associates for his retiring modesty and benevolence; but, in a moment of unguarded confidence, he ventured among those who scoff at Providence and scorn the power of the Most High. He listened to their wild harangues, he was startled by their avowal: "Let us eat, let us drink, let us enjoy our existence whilst we may, for to-morrow we die." They spoke of the delights of sensual enjoyment, of liberty, and of equality—how the rich ought to have no advantages over the poor—how all the produce of industry ought to be equally divided. He was fired

at their seeming candour, for their sophistry as yet concealed their ulterior tenets. Anon they went farther, they said, that there is no heavenly law—religion has no foundation in fact—morality is a restraint on the inclinations, an abridgment of our personal liberty, an invention of priests and of tyrants, who want to rule the world by keeping them under the restraint of ignorance and superstition. He, who had once admitted that pleasure is an object worth living for, had also to admit the superfluity, the injuriousness of religious restraint. Next, the retribution after death was denounced; and the new convert embraced also the doctrine of everlasting sleep. Thus initiated, what was to him the Creator? no law, according to those pernicious notions was given; pleasure is the grand object of life; there is no life after death; no reward; no punishment. And at last he heard proclaimed aloud what the fool says in his heart, "There is no God," and the madman grasped at this idea to slay within him the last lurking affection for the religion of his ancestors; and now, he too, like his teachers, scoffed against all that is holy, he bid defiance to the power of Heaven, imagining that the watchful Eye was closed for him, because he denied his existence. What course of crime was now open for him! with adulterers he harboured; with blasphemers he revelled, with murderers he associated, and on the altar of bloodstained liberty he immolated his benefactors, his friends, and his kindred, and exhibited even his father's head as an evidence of his virtue! abused word, when thus applied to dignify horrors and crimes.—But his doings did not last for ever, and a sudden and awful death closed his

career, whilst yet uttering his imprecations against the Supreme Judge, ay, on the very day on which he had bid defiance, on which he denied his existence, he was made to feel his power, and hurried hence, to answer at that dread tribunal for his misdeeds, and for the grace abused, and for the law he had forsaken.

Yet another who abandoned the path of righteousness had borne in better days the character of an upright man; he was fair in his dealings, and nothing unlawfully obtained was found in his possession. To the widow he was a protector, and a guardian he was to the orphan. But his hour of trial came; the prosperity of his early years was declining, and in his tribulation he called not on God for assistance, he sought not for aid from the merciful One, and he relied on his ingenuity to extricate himself from his difficulties. False shame prevented him from laying his distressed situation open before his friends, his resolution wavered, and he appropriated to his own use the substance of the widow and of the orphan intrusted to his care, and he associated at length with plunderers and shared their spoils, till his turpitude became known to the ministers of the law, and he was punished for the injuries he had done to his fellow-men.—More examples might be furnished; we could follow sinners of every kind step by step, from the first petty crime to the consummation of daring deeds and high-handed outrage; but enough has been shown to prove that the first step taken in sin makes sinning easy and pleasant, and that therefore we need not express so much surprise at the sight of great criminality in others, when we reflect how nearly we are at all times exposed to become what they are

already. Let no man think himself secure in his imagined excellence, for confidence is the forerunner of deterioration; but when we are watchful, and regard with care every step we take, we may then hope to maintain that degree of excellence which we have once obtained, and if we look upon every act of piety, no matter how trifling, as useful, we will indeed reach an enviable degree of moral excellence. Just as the fair creation of God is made up both of little creatures and large ones, as the humble violet is no less fragrant than the magnificent citron: so has every good act its beneficial effect, so does every obedience to God increase and strengthen the purity of our souls. And in this wise taught Ben Azzai, one of the early sages of our nation: הוי רץ למצוה קלה ובורח מן העברה שמצוה גוררת מצוה ועברה גוררת עברה "Run after every little good act, and fly from transgression; for one good act is the forerunner of another, and one transgression produces another." And of this we may be assured, that, no matter how unpleasant any good act may appear at first, its repetition will be easier than its first accomplishment; and therefore if the beginning is once made, we may with more safety look forward to a good ending. In the same way the first step in crime is the chief, and is the precursor of a long list yet to follow, each greater in magnitude, and each easier of accomplishment (as far as the will is concerned) than the other. If we therefore wish to preserve our virtue, we should watch ourselves constantly with great care, and withstand every temptation which might tend to draw us from the right path. And moreover it is necessary that we should frequently examine ourselves dispassionately, to discover

if we have erred; and if our investigation should convict us as wrong, it is our duty to set about at once altering the defects, and not wait till our debt to God has become heavy; for who knows if we will ever be able to alter, since every day may be our last. But if we have gone astray widely from the way marked out by God, if indeed in our obduracy we have added sin to sin, till we are ripe for punishment, be the cause carelessness, pride or temptation: we should stop short in our career, as soon as we make the discovery, and not endeavour to hide our iniquity behind the plausible excuse, that our passions are stronger, or our opportunities greater than another's. In refutation to the first plea, or excuse for sin, we may answer, that it is not the positive strength of an individual's passions or natural inclination to sin which is the reason of one man's being better than another, but that one has them under better control than the other. For if we will watch ourselves and check the rising inclinations, we will be able to overcome strong impulses, and we can be virtuous in despite of them; and therefore also we find many a one with such a temperament always walking humbly before God and mindful of his commandments. On the other hand sluggish passions and weak inclinations may outgrow our strength of combating them, if we yield ourselves to their sway; and in the same manner we find indolent persons, who never displayed any fire, either of genius or activity, acting the parts of very wicked men.—With regard to the second excuse, that our temptations have been great, we may remark, that temptations might be a valid excuse, if we were not informed as to the extent and nature of

our duties; but this is not the case; God's law is explicit, and whatever is prohibited there should be avoided, as we would avoid destruction and death, no matter how great the incentive and opportunity for transgression may be. In matters of common honesty, no person would think of excusing himself for theft, by saying, that he was left in a room where he saw treasures of which he could not refrain from stealing; and yet in religious and moral misdeeds we hear constantly excuses, not the least more reasonable, offered in defence of every species of wrong. So will the Sabbath-breaker tell you, that he measures the small amount of worldly gain against the positive enactment of the law; the man that gives way to his anger and commits an act of violence, that he was provoked to do an unlawful deed by the offences of another; the disobedient child, that his father asked an act of obedience more than he, the child, thought consonant with his reason; and lastly, he that forswears his religion, professes his motives to be worldly preferment. And are grounds like these sufficient to excuse our transgressing? and what better excuses can sinners make? To avoid such a ruinous course, we should rend the veil from our soul, expose her nakedness, and view her deformity with an unquailing eye. We must expect to find ourselves very sinful, and we should not endeavour to gloss over half of our faults. If now we turn away our eyes from our errors, and imagine ourselves better than we are, there is no hope of our ever reforming; but if we seriously grapple with the evil, and analyze our feelings carefully, place our turpitude in its natural hideousness before ourselves, we may look forward to the

time when we may be freed from the burden of our sins. To effect a reformation, we should, in the first place, after discovering our wrongs, endeavour at once to discontinue them, and not leave off by degrees, for this would be compromising with our conscience. Let the profane scoffer not merely omit abusing those who believe, but he must at once think and speak himself respectfully of the Deity, and thus prepare the way for farther amendment. The same may be said with regard to other sins. Having once left off sinning, we should set about a thorough reformation, or in other words, a change of conduct, and endeavour to act in every way comformably to the law of God, and prove in this manner, that the detestation of our crimes is inwardly felt, and our renovated love of righteousness, sincere and undivided. On former occasions we have dwelt at greater length upon the means of repentance, such as fasting, prayer and charity; and it is therefore merely necessary to refer to them now, and to state, that to promote the growth of righteousness, we should, after the custom of our ancestors, fast with contrition, pray with devotion, and distribute charity to the needy, to compensate in as far as lies in our power the wrong we have done, or to use the words of our ancients, to correct the evils in the sum of universal right which we have caused by the unholiness of our deeds. Now it may be asked: "Who should repent? will the great sinner's repentance be available? need the man who formerly was righteous repent, or will his prior good conduct counterbalance his present sins?" To these questions we have distinct answers given by the prophets, especially in the book of Ezekiel, chap. xviii., beginning at verse 20:

"The soul that sinneth, she alone shall die; the son shall not help to bear for the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not help to bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.—And the wicked, when he turneth away from all his sins which he hath committed, and keepeth all my statutes, and executeth justice and righteousness, shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions which he hath committed shall not be remembered unto him; through his righteousness which he hath done shall he live. Have I then the least pleasure in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord Eternal; and not in his turning away from his ways that he may live?—But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth wrong, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth; shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done, shall not be remembered; through his trespass which he hath committed, and through his sin that he hath done,—through them shall he die."

And says the prophet farther:

השליכו מעליכם את כל פשעיכם אשר פשעתם בם ועשו לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה ולמה תמותו בית ישראל: כי לא אחפץ במות המת נאם אדני ה׳ והשיבו וחיו: יחזקאל יח׳ לא׳-לב׳:

"Cast away from yourselves all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that deserveth to die; therefore convert yourselves and live." Ezek. xviii. 31, 32.

We have in this passage a perfect exposition of the various cases, stated to you this day, of righteous men relapsing into sin, and it is emphatically stated, that none of their good deeds shall be remembered, when they become transgressors. If, now, one who once loved virtue has yielded himself to vice, he must not think to escape punishment; for retribution will be awarded to him in the same manner it is to others. Nor must he think that his former good actions will save him from becoming wicked, since we are told from high authority, and experience proves it, how little recollection of former goodness will rescue a man from a downward course of evil; and he that relies upon his attained eminence is but too likely to fall; and he that looks with pride and disdain upon others worse than himself, and feels a self-exaltation unmixed with lowliness, meekness, and gratitude before God, is already far advanced on the road to sin; for security and carelessness have destroyed many a one. If, therefore, a righteous man should be betrayed into sin, let him arrest his straying feet at the outset, and return at once with prayer and repentance. But far better would it be that the first step in sin be never taken, and better would it be that we never knew what pleasure is given by transgression, than that we should feel one moment of remorse and compunction. For our pursuit of virtue may be compared to the ascent of some slippery and icy mountain; we have the strength to toil onward, we have the capacity to reach the summit; but if we loiter on the way, if we, by carelessness or design, suffer our feet to slip, we cannot know where we may be able to halt in our descent; and if we even succeed

to recover our firm footing by grasping at some shrubs that here and there are placed in our way, still we have to retrace the same weary route which we had already once overcome, when our foot lost its hold. And, says the sage, in the name of God: "If thou leavest me one day, two days I will forsake thee," meaning, that, as man is bound to make the beginning in amendment, he will have to do an increased number of holy actions to regain the favour of God he has lost.—If in this way the righteous one too requires care and repentance, the wicked on the other hand should not despair of hope and pardon. The invitation to purify ourselves is held out to all men, and no matter how great the sins, we should consider, that it is not for us to set limits to God's kindness. Nor should we say, "We cannot repent;" for we are told that we should make ourselves a new heart and a new spirit, consequently it is within our power to change ourselves, whenever we please. It is only obduracy which withholds us, it is only our deafness to the affectionate invitation which is a clog upon our reformation. But what do we gain if we persevere in sin? only a temporary gratification of our appetites, or it may be we succeed in making the world believe that we find nothing blamable in our conduct. And what do we lose thereby? we jeopard the everlasting peace of our souls, and incur and confirm the just indignation of our God whom our pretensions cannot deceive. And why should pride prevent us from acknowledging to the world that we have been wrong? must I persist in violating the Sabbath, because I did so once publicly? must I nightly resort to the gaming-house, because I was

once seen there? must my drunkenness be of daily recurrence, because I was once drunk? must forbidden food be daily tasted, because I once transgressed? must I become a prowling thief, because I am known to have wronged a neighbour once? Surely the absurdity of such reasoning is too evident to need a refutation; and yet it would appear that daily such motives prompt men to sin, or to persevere in sinning. How many children have not been permitted to enter the covenant, because their parents had once foolishly spoken against its necessity! how many intermixtures with gentiles have taken place, because one of a family began to set the example! and how many persons publicly violate the holy Sabbath, disregard holiness of life, live in incest, indulge in drunkenness, love dishonesty, because they cherish the evil which others do! Yet, if we only reflect, we must clearly see that we are, in thus doing, treading the way of death—yes, death of the soul, perhaps too the death of the body. And still there is that remedy which the great Father has vouchsafed, it is called REPENTANCE—a return from the evil, and a return to the good. But, if we come to repent, we must not look upon one or another of our crimes as more excusable than the other; for the prophet teaches: "If the wicked return from *all* his sins," and thus, not *one* should be retained, if we truly wish to be forgiven.—If we thus come prepared by repentance, if we superadd deeds of virtue, if we approach with an humble faith in God that He will forgive us in his mercy: we may then hope with confidence that we will be restored to favour, that we have corrected the evil which we had committed.—When

we have, in this manner, accomplished the desire of God, we will willingly again submit to his guidance; and if He chastise us then for our former sins, we will subject ourselves with resignation to the decree which dooms us to suffer; and even should our body sink into death, we will glorify the infinite One, who has suffered us to live long enough, that we might regain his lost favour, and not snatched us hence in our sinfulness!

Brethren! the prophet says in the name of God: "I desire not the death of the guilty one, return ye and live!" Thus we are warned; but do we heed it? Does not the Holy Spirit speak to unwilling ears? It was so in ancient days, when the temple fell a sacrifice to our transgressions; but we have yet been spared to glorify God by our conduct. Let us then hope, that there are many to whom the warning will come like a refreshing shower to quicken into life the seeds of piety which have long lain dormant. This season is emphatically called that of repentance; may it then be indeed accomplished that many a repentant heart will seek the Lord and his righteousness, and return to Him in sincerity and love; so that when the coming Day of Forgiveness of sin closes, many a newly accepted child of God may cry out in the congregation of the faithful, in the fulness of faith: "The Lord is the God, his kingdom will endure for ever; He is our God, and there is none besides Him."

O Lord God! shower upon us thy blessings, and extend over us thy protecting arm. Forgive us our trespasses and purify us from our iniquities, and do not destroy us utterly according to thy mercy; and do Thou according to thy promises receive thy children

that pray to Thee; and stay the avenger, and withhold thy anger from the sinful creatures of thy hand that call on Thee. And do Thou comfort our souls, and refreshen our spirit with thy grace, and let us experience on this day and for ever, that Thou art still the Father, and Protector, and Guardian of Israel; and on the day, which Thou hast appointed as the period on which atonement is made for us, let it be thy will to inscribe in thy books of remembrance: "My children, your guilt is blotted out, you shall not die."—Let this be thy will, and mayest Thou speedily send the redeemer to Zion. Amen.

Elul 29th. } 5595.
Sept. 23d. }

DISCOURSE XLIII.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

O OUR GOD and Creator! we thy people are here assembled this day to offer up to Thee the grateful thanks of our hearts for the many favours which we have received from thy bounty. When the world was sunk in darkness, Thou calledst forth thy servant Abraham to shine like the light of the bright beacon on the bosom of the trackless ocean. Amidst idolatrous nations Thou didst preserve his son and his grandson, till people ignorant of thy worship learned to adore thy name. When Jacob went down to Egypt to fulfil his destiny and the destiny of his house,

in the land of the sons of Mitzraim: thy glory went thither with him, and he did not leave this earth, till his eyes had foreseen thy kingdom, that is to spread over all flesh. His children Thou didst not forsake; and when they had, unto the fourth generation, endured the oppression of the princes of Noph, Thou sentest thy servant Moses to work great things in thy name; and Pharaoh acknowledged thy almighty power, O Lord! and let thy children go free from bondage; and they went forth to follow thy guidance in the howling wilderness. There, Thou gavest them water out of the arid rock, and from heaven Thou bestowedst on them, in abundance, bread never before tasted by men. But their souls too Thou didst disinthral, Thou banishedst the gloom of superstition and false worship from their minds, and yon favoured Sinai witnessed thy descent to speak unto thy people, and to command them the path they should follow in serving Thee. But still thy goodness did not end here; and ever hast Thou been the Guardian of Israel; ever hast Thou watched over us, that we have not been cut off, and that the burden of misfortune has not crushed us. O do Thou then, in thy mercy, continue to bless us, to preserve us, and to protect us; and if not for our sakes, if our sins are too great, if our transgressions cry aloud for retribution, O do it for the sake of thy abundant mercies, and for the sake of the covenant Thou didst make with our ancestors, when Thou chosest them as thy own people and treasure! Amen.

Brethren!

If a public teacher were to consult his own ease and

popularity, he would assuredly never undertake to grapple with the follies of the age, which he, by his own individual exertions, certainly cannot hope to overcome. Nothing but ill-will, perhaps even hatred, perhaps taunts, can be his reward from those whose faults he may unwittingly expose, and very many others will think that remarks which may wound the self-love of any class of his hearers had better be omitted. Besides this, no sooner does any one presume to teach, than the tongue of detraction is busy with his character, and even the wicked will search for trifles, for small foibles, magnify them by the light of envy and malice, and declare that one so bad as he is, has no right to presume to correct others equally good and virtuous with himself. Add to this, that words will rarely effect reformation, at least an immediate one, in those for whose improvement he is anxious, and the feeling of mortification which the generally sensitive philanthropist experiences at seeing his advice contemned: and any one can easily determine, that he, who lifts up the voice of warning to his fellow-men, has undertaken not an enviable task. Yet it is necessary that there should be guides to show the way—sentinels to warn of the coming storm—leaders to commence ever the work of reformation; and for the people in general it is requisite that they should look with respect upon their teachers, and listen with deference to the advice which they may offer in accordance with the law of God. Let no one think, that the teacher can take any pleasure in exposing faults (for he that would be guilty of such an odious outrage deserves not to be called to the chair of instruction in Israel),

but that he is moved by a love towards his fellow-men to exhort them in time to escape from the vengeance of the outraged covenant, which will be executed on the hardened sinner who transgresseth and repenteth not. Is not the teacher himself one of the people? is not their glory his glory? is not their shame his shame?—Why then should he be blamed when honest truth compels him to speak against the misdeeds which he sees wrought around him, by which right is neglected—religion slighted—evil practised—and wickedness fostered?—The same already happened to Jeremiah, whose misfortune it was to live in wicked times, when the law of God had been almost forgotten, and when the last remains of our national glory were fast sinking to decay. He often had announced the punishment that would inevitably follow, and as a recompense for his faithfulness the powerful sinners of those days visited him, the humble prophet, with unmerited persecution. I must refer you to the twentieth chapter of this book, where you can read the details, and where also you will find the almost surprising fact that Jeremiah was an unwilling agent, equally so with Moses in the time of Pharaoh, mistrusting, like the great prophet, his power to arrest the evil, which to denounce he was sent. He says, speaking to God: "Thou didst persuade me, O Lord! and I was persuaded; Thou laidst thy hand strongly on me, and didst prevail; I am laughed at all the time, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak, must I cry out, violence and wasting must I proclaim; because the word of the Lord is become unto me a disgrace, and a derision all the time. And I

thought, I will not make mention of Him, and I will not speak any more in his name. But it became in my heart as a burning fire, enclosed within my bones, and I was weary with enduring, and I could not overcome it." Here we see how gladly the prophet would have refrained from obtruding his advice upon the unwilling ears of the multitude, knowing that the more he spoke in the name of the Lord, the more he would find himself despised and hated. But the word would not be thus restrained, the message of which he was full could not thus be suppressed, and he felt as though a burning fire was consuming his heart and wasting his bones, until he had spread the message of Heaven before the people, and had cried it aloud in their ears, so that even unwilling they were compelled to hear. —Now as an humble and unworthy follower of the great ones of the former days, with powers far inferior beneath the least on their list, with a perfect consciousness that much may be alleged against myself, with a full knowledge that I have sinned as others have sinned, I think it my solemn duty to inveigh against the many derelictions which I daily see practised by the remnant of Israel. I know full well, as well as any one can inform me, that in all likelihood but few will listen with patience to any thing I have to say, fewer yet will apply the moral to themselves, and fewer still will leave the place of worship amended in heart and resolved to alter their doings; but nevertheless I must discharge what I consider my duty, let the result be what it may; perhaps the heart of one may suddenly feel and acknowledge the power of the Lord, and who knows but that one sheep may return to the fold of the great Shep-

herd, when it hears that it has strayed in its wanderings, and that the return way is not impeded by obstacles which cannot be surmounted.

Brethren! the painful truth must force itself upon the conviction of every one who thinks, that the present age is not one of religion, but that, on the contrary, the duties which the law demands are daily more and more neglected.—Why is this? why is the house of God empty? why are the Sabbaths and festivals neglected? why do those fall off who formerly were true and steadfast? why does the father show the evil example to his sons, and the mother to her daughters? It is, because the age has learned to love gain more than the law, riches more than virtue, the perishable more than the everlasting,—in a word, to love the outward world more than the Almighty God! But why should we of the present day be so much more sedulous in the pursuit of wealth, than were our forefathers? have we any claim to a longer duration of life than they had? It may, indeed, be freely conceded, that the present age has made wonderful advances in the useful sciences, in refinement and luxury; all the elegancies of life are now more appreciated and more accessible than they were before our days; and a general spirit of inquiry, for good or for evil, is spread abroad, before which error and fanaticism will ere long have to retire. All this the moralist will cheerfully acknowledge; but he will instance it as an additional motive for gratitude to the Supreme Ruler, for having showered down so many more blessings on us than on our fathers. But how do the worldly repay this kindness! Instead of repairing to the house of God to return their thanks

to the Dispenser of all good, their feet do but seldom seek the sacred threshold; and if they do go, they arrive at so late an hour, as to disturb by their entrance the assembled worshippers; and when there, their indecorous behaviour, their inattention, their conversation where silence should reign, their looks of disdain, as though they honoured the worship by their presence,—all prove that their hearts are not engaged in the divine service, and that their attendance for the once or twice a year is but a mere outward show, a display more of their adherence to religion than a sincerely felt devotion. And when do many of these persons come? on the usual day of the weekly rest? on a festival, when their business might suffer by their absence? No—only on such days when their worldly affairs cannot be attended to, when the laws of men forbid work to be done; but at other times the world is more loved than God, and the courts of his holy house are left untrodden of their feet. And do reasoning men call this devotion? do Israelites call this worshipping the God of their fathers? Wo, wo, on the sinning generation! this is mockery! this is profanation! not such is the service which the Lord desires, not such the servants. For already against the sinners of his own day did Isaiah testify (i. 10–13): "Hear ye the word of the Lord, chiefs of Sodom, hearken to the instruction of our God, people of Gomorrah. To what purpose serveth me the mass of your sacrifices? saith the Lord, I am sated with the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fatlings, and the blood of steers, of lambs, and of wethers, I desire not. When you come to be seen in my presence—who asketh this

at your hands to tread down my courts? Bring no more the offering of falsehood, it is to me incense of abomination—new-moons, Sabbaths, festivals—I cannot endure misdeeds with festive gathering." From this it will clearly appear how odious is to God that pretended holiness, where the outward conformity does not find a responding feeling in the soul; and no matter how much soever we have succeeded in glossing over our faults, no matter how much polishing we have applied to the unsightly surface: we may be perfectly assured, that the inward corruption will not escape Him to whom all is known. No, brethren, this is not the way which can be pleasing to our heavenly Father; if we are bad, if we are sinners, do not let us figure in our minds an image of excellence and apply it to ourselves; if we have transgressed the law let us not, in the name of justice, lay claim to the title of pious and virtuous men; for in this way we would add to our other sins the crime of insulting the Holy Spirit, which we yet cannot deceive. As well might an Israelite sit down to a table covered with forbidden food and ask God's blessing upon the sinful meal! Would such worship not be better omitted? And yet this is the spirit of our age as it was of Isaiah's, that on high occasions we now and then show our faces in God's temple, we bring our sacrifice, we display a certain zeal and energy for a moment, and imagine that in this way we have satisfied our conscience; but no sooner does interest call, no sooner become crime and sin a little more profitable than virtue and piety, than we forsake the standard of the Lord, "we see the thief," to use the words of Scrip-

ture, "and run after him, and have our portion with adulterers." And do we not see hourly the bitter fruits of this mockery of religion? Where is the wholesome discipline which parents should exercise over their children? it is sacrificed to interest; the father fears that his son may not become great enough and rich enough; and straightway he permits him, nay teaches and in a measure compels him, to desecrate the Sabbath-day, whilst he perhaps himself makes his appearance at the Synagogue, and even pretends to direct and lead others.—But, brethren, I must put it to your own conscience to answer the question without self-love or self-deception, whether it is really necessary for the advancement of your children, that religion should be so totally neglected? whether it is absolutely requisite that your offspring should be taught by you to despise God's law?—In yon Decalogue which surmounts our ark where the law is kept, in yon Decalogue which the Lord gave to his people for their government, it is written: "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother," and you are right in exacting implicit obedience from your children, in accordance with the law of God. But the same Decalogue also teaches: "Remember the Sabbath," and this you imagine may be safely left unenforced. Are you so blind as not to see, that you cannot obtain your children's esteem, if you show them the example, or permit them to neglect this precept? Will not the child reason thus: "The obedience I owe my parents and to the law of God rest upon the same foundation, and if one is unnecessary, the other is equally so." But you may perhaps say, that this reasoning is never

resorted to; nevertheless, experience may be safely appealed to, to prove, that filial obedience has much deteriorated under the shameful want of religious education from which so many of the rising generation suffer. Formerly the father spoke, and no one of his family would contradict him; but now, the son rises in judgment against the father, and the daughter against the mother; and that deference to parental authority in general, and that respect for old age, which were once so becoming in youth, are, alas! fast wearing away among us; and even the union of families and the unanimity of interest and wishes are disappearing before the selfish pursuits of the individual members of the household. I may, perhaps, be charged with overdrawing the picture, and of adding fictitious traits to my portrait; but I believe that I have underrated the truth, and that the evil is yet greater than I have stated. And why is it so? because the children are not early taught to love God above all things, and that his favour is to be prized more than riches; and if even it should have been taught in infancy, no sooner is the boy old enough to aspire to a profession, or to embark in trade, than he is flatly told, that now, as he has to make his living, he may neglect the Sabbath, and eat whatever is put before him; it is his business to get along in the world, but not to be stopped by speculative opinions. I know well enough, that there are honourable exceptions to this almost universal degeneracy; but too many, alas! do as I have represented it; and the consequences may easily be calculated on with certainty: the child grows up without any religion whatever, he neither fears God,

for that his parents have not taught him, and he honours not these, because he cannot see from his own reasoning that they deserve it from him. And when such a one is asked, why he is not religious, he answers, that he does know little or nothing about it, not having had any instruction and but little of example before him, and he blames his parents for not educating him to be a servant of the Lord. It is indeed true, that an excuse of this kind is not enough to justify a want of religion in any one; since the means of self-education are at present so plentifully scattered about, that whoever wishes it can learn, and there are enough righteous yet left whose example may safely be followed. But this does in nowise do away with the blame attachable to parents and guardians for the entire want of, or the little care devoted to a religious domestic education; for no matter how much a child may learn at school, when removed from his parents' eye, it is the domestic fireside nevertheless, where the word of God should be made dear to him. For what does the Bible teach? "And thou shalt teach them (the words of God) diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." I may freely leave it to the reflection of my auditors to determine, whether this is their mode of doing, whether they make the law of God lovely in their children's eyes, whether they show them by their example, no less than by precept, the way they ought to go. But, alas! how many parents are deficient in this respect! how much of frivolity, how much of trifling, do the

children see from their elders! how anxiously are the pursuits of pleasure and of gain persevered in, whilst religion lies cast off in a corner, neglected and unheeded! The child soon perceives that its parents labour on the Sabbath, that they do not go to the place of worship even if the weather be inviting, but that the dancing-rooms, the concert-halls and the theatres, are crowded even amidst the stifling heats of summer and the terrific storms of winter: in short, the child sees the house of God empty, and the resorts of pleasure thronged to overflowing. Suppose now, that an innocent boy, in the simplicity of his heart, should ask his father, why he goes not to the Synagogue whither he himself had been sent in the company of an esteemed relative? or, suppose that a daughter should demand of her mother the reason for her being prohibited from doing her little playful work, while the parents are engaged in the pursuit of their usual avocation:—I ask, what must be the parents' feelings? or how can they hope that their children should be better than themselves, if shame seals their lips, or if such examples are perpetually exhibited?

And still some parents desire to be called Israelites, and are unwilling to suffer an imputation of a disregard of religion to be fastened on them. Vain delusion! the substance is yielded, and the shadow grasped! And their children they will not permit, as is but just and proper, to mingle in marriage with other nations! But how can this be prevented by the system of education so generally pursued? For correct religious knowledge is not at all, or at best but imperfectly, imparted, and they must see, that to

their elders at least worldly interest is the paramount good; how can it then be expected of them, that they should abstain from following their perverted notions of right, when inclination, passion, and interest call, merely to gratify a parent's whim?—And even suppose that the rising generation should be, like the present one, vacillating between the service of pleasure and money on the one, and that of God on the other hand, what benefit to piety and true morality can thereby accrue? But even this doubtful state can hardly be expected to continue, if things are not changed; for daily more and more will fall off, our number already too small, especially in this favoured country, will be gradually diminished by apostacy, by intermarriage, and by death; and, to speak in human probability, in less than the age of one man the name of Israelite will hardly be known in this land, save as an object of memory, to be referred to as something that has been. I do not say that this will be the actual result, but only that the misconduct of our people tends towards it.—For lift up your eyes, you who are in the habit of attending in this house to adore the God of your fathers, and see how few young men resort hither, of how many families not even one attends on the Sabbath, how many middle-aged persons are known to follow their pursuits on the holy day, and how many children are put to work on the day which God ordained should be observed, even by the stranger and the slave, nay, the ox and the ass—see how many children are without the means of being informed of their eternal welfare, when the fault might easily be remedied by a concerted action: I say, view all this, as I have done, with anguish, with sorrow,

with regret, and with shame at such degeneracy of Israel, and then blame the philanthropist, if you can, when he declares that our people are hastening along the downward path of ruin and destruction. It is useless to deny it, that we have fallen upon evil days; for but rarely has the religion of God been so much neglected as it now is, and the result thereof will be dreadful indeed if the evil is not speedily arrested. We flatter ourselves occasionally with the reflection, that we must needs be better than our forefathers; for they worshipped idols, which we do not.—Admitted; but have we not our idols too? They indeed worshipped images, the works of their own hands; they only however wanted to imitate their neighbours, they wanted to be rid of the burden of the law, they did not wish to serve God, that they might be allowed to drink wine out of basins, wallow in forbidden luxuries, profane the Sabbath, and follow the evil desires of their hearts. For we read in the xxviii chapt. of Isaiah, how the people of his day had become corrupt, by following pleasure and gluttony and neglecting the law, and they fancied, to use the prophet's words: "We have made a covenant with death, and with the grave we have made a contract, the overflowing stream when it passed will not come over us; for we have made lies our protection, and with falsehood we cover ourselves." They thus imagined, that whatever evil might pass over the world would not come to them, they were in their own notions amply secured in their doings, although they left unminded the law of their God.—In the same manner we also have our idols, if not precisely stocks and stones, certainly those having equally pernicious

consequences. Our worship of the present day, as indicated already, is the pursuit of pleasure and gain. Do we not sacrifice to them all that we hold dear? the peace of our own souls, the welfare of the community, and the moral elevation of our children? Do we not also neglect the law of God? Do we not look upon the Sabbath-breaker with perfect complaisance? Do we not swallow the things which God has declared unclean? Do we not seek riches as the thing most to be desired? Do not men spend day after day, week after week, month after month, in one constant round of unceasing exertions to obtain a larger portion of their idol? And what at last is the great advantage in being so immensely rich? Suppose your gold is too much to be counted —suppose your ships cover every ocean—suppose you have possessions in all parts of the world—have you thereby arranged your covenant with death? will the grave not ere long claim its own, and enclose your body within the dark gloomy dwelling? And even before this period arrives, may not the sweeping stream—the devouring flame—the destroying storm—the vicissitudes of trade—carry off the idol you so ardently love? And then you will call down maledictions on your own head, for having neglected those interests which neither the stream, nor the fire, nor the storm can injure, the peace everlasting, the treasury of virtue, which can be obtained only by serving God.

But in the very pursuit of wealth there is at all times something so heartless, that the man of feeling, even if we leave religion totally out of view, ought to shrink from it as he would from destruc-

tion. Those who are striving to outdo their neighbours, often resort to such means to oppress the less cunning, that many a one whom the laws cannot punish for a positive infringement of right, is yet so guilty in moral equity, that he is scarcely more honest than a highway robber. Many a one is attended by menials, who has acquired his gain by underhanded trickery. The world knows perhaps nothing of the knavery of such people; they are perhaps called honest, upright, honourable, and worthy members of the community; but who with the smallest portion of humanity would wish to have by fraud sent a husband to an early grave, and turned his widow and children adrift to gain a pittance by daily labour, reduced from affluence to poverty? Who would like to live in a palace, the very stones of which are cemented, so to say, by the tears of a ruined partner, or of a defrauded public who confided in his honesty, but found themselves outwitted and overreached by superior address, without being able to punish the wrong they deeply feel, but cannot expose?—If you now do bow to such idols, are you less idolaters than were the Israelites of old? If you forget justice—love—good-fellowship—religion—kindred—friends—and God, merely to obtain gold, which avails nothing in the grave: are you not cherishing a false worship?—And if you yourselves think such pursuits unworthy of yourselves—if you believe yourselves bound to love and worship our Father in heaven beyond any thing that exists—how can you wish your children and those intrusted to your care to do what you think evil? how can you teach, or even permit them, to slight the religion in which we

all were born? Is it reasonable, that you can be justified in inducing them to depart from those duties, which you yourselves look upon as necessary to your happiness?

And in the same degree as the pursuit of gain is injurious to the finer moral perceptions, we may assert, that, without doubt, every one who has had any experience, must often have felt how unsatisfactory are the enjoyments of pleasure and the possession of riches. We think we should be extremely happy to see something which we hear highly spoken of, to hear a celebrated singer, to taste a particular food; but no sooner has experience come, than we despise the bauble that allured us. We fancy that the possession of a given sum would satisfy all our reasonable desires; God blesses us, and the wish is obtained; but, as if by magic, another and a larger boon is at once coveted, and when this is got, more and more will be thirsted for to still the yet unquenched desire for gold: just like a spoiled child that cries for a rattle or some other toy which, when obtained, it breaks wantonly after being delighted with it for a brief space, and now it cries for a handsomer and more valuable plaything.—Virtues on the contrary are never cloying, never despised when once acquired; and it may safely be asserted, that few would take the money back which they have expended in charity, even if it were offered to them, with an understanding that every merit of the gift should thus be cancelled; for there is so much holiness in rectitude and virtue, that hardened indeed must be that sinner who could part with the least of his acquired mental and spiritual riches.

It was said in the commencement of our subject, that we had no more right to neglect religion than our fathers had before us. Very few indeed there are who would deny this in theory; yet how many deny it in practice, nay even in words! We thus hear it often alleged, that our fathers were ignorant, but that we in a more enlightened age should be above their prejudices. Now, no one will gainsay the evident fact that this age has made improvements, wonderful improvements, if you will, upon the discoveries of former periods; but it is utterly denied, that in moral sciences the smallest advance has been achieved, simply because it is impracticable. The man who builds a steam-engine, which travels through an entire degree of latitude in one brief hour, so as almost to annihilate time and space, has thereby conceived no stronger or better notions of God, and of the nature of his Maker, than the laborious farmer who drives his ox-cart, at a rate perhaps sixty times slower. There is no connexion whatever between the outward and the inward world, any more than that, if new benefits are vouchsafed through inventions and improvements to mankind, more gratitude should be shown to the Giver of wisdom, and a greater promptness displayed to engage in his service. What would a human master think, if his servants for a few pennies of daily wages would toil from morning till night, but as soon as he gave them a bag of silver for their pay, they should simultaneously refuse doing any work whatever, or at least no more than they might deem enough?—What would any one call it, but sheer ingratitude?—And yet we act so towards God! When the name of Jew was a passport to ill-treat-

ment; when we were oppressed in the whole world; when many tears and few joys were our lot, we were cheerful, willing, servants to our God. The world then admired our constancy, our devoted heroism. But now enlargement has been given to us, persecution for opinion's sake is no longer the fashion, and especially in this land we can worship God without let or hindrance, we here have a perfect equality with the other inhabitants: yet here it is, where our religion is the most neglected, where we have truly succeeded in making our name a byword for carelessness and neglect of our glorious hope. When punished we were good, when free we are wicked.—Is that the gratitude which we are to offer to our Father and heavenly Master? Is it thus we are to celebrate the Passover and our redemption from slavery? Is it thus that we can hope for a continuation of the divine favour? Certainly not, and indeed! indeed! we may justly fear that ere long the weight of God's vengeance will fall heavily upon us who are guilty of sinning against his just decrees. For we imitate the vices of the gentiles, but neglect their virtues. They pursue gain and pleasure, and we do likewise. But they devote money to public worship; they establish schools for the education of their poor; they hasten to their churches; they honour the teachers of their religion; they, many of them at least, try to serve God, although in some respects erroneously; but we are backward in supporting the worship of olden days; we hardly think, that there are poor who too ought to partake of an education that they might learn to fear the Lord; we stay away for months from the holy but humble Synagogue; we honour

not those in whose mouths the law of God dwells; and we cannot devote the necessary time to serve our Maker—and yet we alone have the true law to guide our erring footsteps.—Is this to last for ever? Is this indifference to have no end? Is there never to be harmony among us to effect jointly measures for public benefit? How long shall the spectacle be witnessed, that the good which one proposes is to be thwarted by the folly of another; and that the good of our scattered congregations is to be lost sight of, because those whose business it is will not meet and discuss in friendship and concert the necessary measures?—Believe me, brethren, that there exists a great mass of evil; but it can be removed, when once we are anxious to effect a reformation, and when we are truly conscious of our errors.—Repentance and changes, even great ones, are within the compass of probability, and of this too the Bible speaks. A remarkable instance is found in the king Josiah, as we read in the *Haphtorah* of to-day. His father and grandfather had been excessively sinful, and their abominations had filled the land with wickedness. Josiah was very young when he became king; but no sooner was he made conscious of the sins he was unwittingly committing, than he returned in truth to the Lord, and did, not like Pharaoh of Egypt, who spoke, "Who is the Lord?" and who refused to obey the prophet's mandate to let Israel go free, but like his ancestor David, who submitted to the decree of God whom he had offended. The Passover in commemoration of the Exodus had for years been neglected; but now Josiah restored it in all its former splendour, and he purified the land of the images

which filled it.—Of him too it is said, 2 Kings xxiii. 25:

וכמהו לא היה לפניו מלך אשר שב אל ה' בכל לבבו ובכל נפשו ובכל מאדו ככל תורת משה ואחריו לא קם כמהו: מלכים ב' כג' כה':

"And like him there was before him no king, who returned unto the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the law of Moses, and after him arose none other."

Here we see that a son of a wicked king, and who surely did not lack those who would have ministered to his vices, was truly repentant and followed the law. Let such an example not be lost upon us. True, the spirit of the age is avarice: let us, who are of the house of Israel, resist it; let us in our endeavour to obtain a living not overstep the legitimate bounds; and if riches should be found unattainable with a strict adherence to the law, then let us prefer to be poor, let us then enrich our souls though we be humble. Thus many of our forefathers became the great ones of the earth; thus they earned for themselves an imperishable fame, better far than gold and silver; and thus too can we all arrive at that glorious state, that we can depart this life and leave not one behind to curse our name, and be assured, that there will be many who will honour our memory and bless the day that we were permitted to see the light of the world.

Do Thou, O our Father! grant us thy salvation, and remove from our bosom the heart of stone, and give us the heart of flesh which Thou hast promised;

so that we all may serve Thee, and deserve thy favour, which is unending. Amen.

Nissan 14th. } 5596.
April 1st. }

NOTE.—This Discourse should properly be the forty-eighth, in order of time; but it is inserted in this place to allow the seven lectures on the Messiah to follow each other consecutively.

DISCOURSE XLIV.

THE MESSIAH.

No. I.

O OUR GOD and Lord! through the mouth of thy prophets Thou hast promised hope and salvation to thy people, and hast announced unto them, that they should ever find in Thee protection and salvation. Do Thou, therefore, now display over us thy almighty power, and manifest towards us thy wondrous deeds, that the gentiles may not say, "Where is their God?" But let them see, and let them feel, that oppress and deride thy children, that Thou art the Lord, and that thy reign extends from the beginning to the consummation of all created things, and that for ever and ever Thou art God. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Often, doubtless, has the subject of the advent of a Messiah been urged upon your attention, both by Israelites and those who are of a different persuasion.

Full often, too, has this subject been learnedly and ably handled by controversial writers and oral disputants; and, nevertheless, professed believers in revelation are nowise agreed as to the nature of the Messiah, nor the object and intent of his mission. Still, because the doctrine of the coming of this peculiar favourite of God is so vitally important, it is absolutely necessary to endeavour to obtain some correct idea concerning him, despite of the many erroneous and generally false notions and doctrines, promulgated chiefly by persons interested in maintaining views materially differing from ours.—Let us elucidate, first, the nature of the Messiah by the light which Scripture, the only true test, affords, and next, we must by the same rule trace out the extent and scope of his mission.

Our opponents aver that the deity is of a divided nature, that is to say, that although God be *one*, there still exists a modification in this *oneness*, to use an expressive word, which permits God to divide himself into god and man; or in other words, one part of the deity could, and at one time did, invest himself with all the attributes of humanity and mortality, while the other portion retained the divine attributes and the superintending power over all nature, and even over the other portion of himself which had become man. All this was done, because in the fall of Adam all mankind are averred to have earned everlasting condemnation; and therefore, it is contended, that to insure them salvation, God himself had to descend into the body of the seed of the woman (Eve), to be enabled, by the assumption of the human form, to offer himself as an atonement for the sins of man-

kind to the other portion of the deity not invested with humanity. From all which it would appear to be the opinion of the sect alluded to that, to be able to effect the salvation of man, God had to sacrifice himself to himself to make it possible for him to save, unto happiness and salvation, the creatures whom He had formed for happiness and salvation. This incarnation of the deity moreover, which it is alleged was to be, and actually was sacrificed for the sins of man, they call Christ, or Messiah, which rendered into the vernacular tongue, means the anointed chief or priest, elevated to his station by having been consecrated with oil, by anointing with which priests and chiefs among us used to be appointed. In short, they say that the Messiah, whom the prophets foretold, was to be a god, and a portion of the deity, that through him alone the salvation of all men was to be effected, and that lastly, this personage, or to use their term, this divine personage, has made his appearance already, and that, therefore, the prophecies alluding and referring to a redeemer to be sent have been already accomplished. I believe, brethren, that I have stated to you, with as much candour and fairness as I was able to summon, the nature, attributes, and scope of the Nazarene doctrines, which I did, in order to lay before you a concise view of our ideas on the same subject, and to prove, how these are deducible and strengthened by the plain import of the text of Holy Writ.

First, we contend that the ever-blessed God is not capable of division or change; and, secondly, we maintain that nowhere is there even a remote allusion to prove the necessity of the intervention of a

mediator to insure man's salvation.—God, according to our opinion, is infinite, immeasurable, and indivisible; that is to say, we have no conception of the period when his existence began, nor can we conceive any possibility of his ceasing to exist; immeasurable we call Him, because the immense extent of space is not able to hold Him; He does not exist in the world, but the world exists in, as well as through Him; and indivisible we believe Him, because no material body can separate Him into parts, no walls can bar Him out, no seas can withstand Him, and no darkness can screen us from his presence. And thus also we are taught in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there, and if I should lie down in the deep, I should find Thee." The whole of this eminently beautiful, devotional Psalm must be familiar to you, and it is therefore enough to refer you to it, for the sake of proving that the Bible-doctrine of the Deity is an entire omnipresence and a perfect indivisibility. —Now, what can be meant by the idea of god father and god son, but that the divine essence is divided into two and distinct persons, of whom one must of necessity have the priority of existence? For, grant that the existence of both is coeval, or that they were always coexistent, then it must follow that there are two independent powers; because, if one of the persons be more powerful than the other, how can there be harmony and concert? or even grant this, on account of the perfection of the divine nature, it yet is left to be determined, who of the two is the creator? The absurdity of a divided deity is thus made per-

fectly manifest, it being so completely disconsonant with common sense, besides which the holy law plainly declares: שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the sole eternal Being," or according to the common version, "the Lord our God, the Lord is one!" This certainly means that a plurality of the divine power is entirely dissonant with the doctrines of revelation. But, say the Nazarenes: "We do not say that there are two gods, but that the father and son are one." Let us examine this doctrine also by the same standard we just now adopted. The father, I presume, we must suppose to be the creator of all, and consequently the elder power, and of course the son, as well as every thing else in nature, is a creature or an emanation from the creator. If you admit this, and you must come to this at last, then it follows that God has at one time or the other divested himself of a portion of his power and conferred it upon another personage; or worse, that He has divided himself into two or perhaps more parts. But independently of the entire unintelligibleness of such an opinion, it is contradicted by the plain letter of Scripture, which says (Isaiah xlii. 8): "I am the everlasting One, this is my name, and my glory to any other I will not give, nor my praise to images." (Ibid. xliii. 10–12): "You are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant, whom I have chosen; in order that you may know, and believe me, and understand that I am He; before me no god was formed, and after me there will be none. I, only I, am the Lord, and there is none beside me a saviour. I have myself told, and have saved, have caused you to hear, and among you was no stranger god; and you are then

my witnesses, saith the Lord—and I am God." Ibid. xliv. 6: "Thus saith the Lord, Israel's King and his Redeemer, the Lord of the universe, I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no god." Ibid. 24: "I am the Lord who make all things; who spread out the heaven by myself alone, and extend the earth from myself." And in the same manner also speaks Jeremiah x.: "But the Lord God is truth; He is the living God and the everlasting King.—Yes, thus ye shall say to them, The gods that made not the heaven and the earth shall perish from the earth and from beneath these heavens." All these passages, which could be fortified by innumerable others, clearly demonstrate, that the God of the Bible is not of a divisible nature, but of simple essence and of eternal duration. What are the words we have quoted: "I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no god?" This verse surely means to say, that the Creator God is alone the King and Redeemer; for beside Him no other god exists. How then can there be a second personage to share the honours of the Supreme? How can we reconcile it with reason, to assert in one phrase that one God alone does all, and claims all the honour of worship, and in another moment to maintain that, nevertheless, there are two parts composing the same one, both claiming and deserving the same regard and adoration?—We could carry this argument out to a much greater length, but it is not expedient to treat the subject in a controversial light, any farther than to exhibit to your understanding the absurdity and the contradiction to revelation which are presented in the idea of a plurality in the deity, or of a division in the divine es-

sence. From all the above we must deduce as a natural consequence, that our Messiah cannot be god; since that would say, in effect, that God himself is the Messiah, or that a portion of himself were the Messiah, both of which doctrines have been shown to be fallacious.

In the second place, especially with reference to the object of the sending of this messenger, he is not to come to save sinners, much less to die in atonement for them; because we believe, and can prove, that God requires no assistance to enable Him to save the man whom He has created. Where first the idea of a vicarious sacrifice took its rise from we are not able to determine; but of one thing we are perfectly certain, that not the most distant allusion is found in the Bible which, if rationally interpreted, will bear an interpretation favourable to this doctrine. Let us now take a calm view of the assertion, that God could not forgive man for the original sin committed by Adam, till a vicarious atonement (for this, I believe, is the term employed) was made; and what does it amount to? but that God is unable to forgive sins; which is a monstrous absurdity, even admitting that by the sins of our original progenitors we were debarred from all admission into happiness. But is this true? By no means; for as regards the first, God emphatically styles himself the Forgiver of sins, the Pardoner of iniquities, expressed in the two Hebrew words סולח and מוחל; consequently He requires no one person nor any one thing to authorize Him to forgive, if He, the All-wise thinks that the atonement made, or suffered, or even contemplated by the sinner, be enough. As also we read in Exod. xxxiv. 6–7, "The

Lord Everlasting, is a God merciful and gracious, long of anger and great in kindness and truth; He preserveth kindness unto the thousandth generation, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, yet suffereth not guilt to pass unpunished." Here the words employed, as plainly as words can speak, distinctly announce that every sin will be visited with God's indignation, that every sinner must be punished: yet that, nevertheless, there is a remedy, a return to righteousness, a change of conduct, which will cause God to show himself not as the Avenger of outraged righteousness, but as the merciful Father, who will bear with the fault of the child when he alters, chastise with moderation, and then forgive the guilt. This is so beautifully expressed by the word נשא which originally means *to bear*, *to carry*, *to suffer*, and thus it expresses the indulgent kindness of the Father of all more strongly, than any other term implying forgiveness could have done. All this must tend to prove that the eternal Lord of all is of himself able, without assistance or intervention, to bear with and to forgive whatever sins may have been committed from nature's birthday to her dissolution; He is, indeed כל יכול all sufficient and truly אל שדי the almighty God, able to effect every thing; and consequently there can be no being able to afford and grant Him the slightest assistance.

Yet it may be said: "True, God is able; but was He willing? was not death decreed in consequence of Adam's sins?" To this we answer, that death was indeed decreed; but not death of the soul, not the damnation of the vital principle, but the decease only of what is naturally mortal, when divested of that

ethereal spark which bestowed on it life and motion. Am I understood?—Yet with regard to everlasting damnation having been the portion of every one that died before a given period, it is absolutely contradicted, not only by the spirit, but by the letter of the Bible also. First, nowhere in direct terms is it announced that a Messiah should come to redeem *souls* from purgatory; and secondly, we are taught that we have power over sin, as God said to Cain: "If thou dost act well thou wilt be accepted, but if thou dost not act well, sin will rest at the door, and to thee is his desire, but thou canst rule over him."—Here a direct dominion over sin is conceded to man. Farther, in Leviticus xviii. 5, we read: "And you shall observe my statutes and my judgments, which a man is to do and live through them; I am the Lord." Deut. xxxii. 47: "For it is not an empty matter for you, on the contrary, it is your life."—Solomon, the wise king of Israel, speaking of the divine wisdom, the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of the law, says (Prov. viii. 35): "For he that findeth me, hath found life, and hath obtained favour of the Lord." Ibid. ix. 11: "For through me thy days will be many, and multiplied will be to thee the years of life." Ibid. iii.: "Long life is on her right, on her left are riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. A tree of life is she to those that lay hold of her, and her supporters are happy." In Ezekiel, also (chap. xx.), we have a confirmation (if any confirmation could even be needed to fortify the doctrines of the blessed Moses) in the following words: "And I gave unto them my statutes, and my judgments I made known to them, which a

man is to do and live through them. And also my Sabbaths I gave to them, to be for a sign between me and them, to show that I am the Lord that sanctified them." All these passages, selected without any particular care from various books of Scripture, go far to prove that God, in giving the Sabbath and the statutes contained in the law delivered from Sinai, intended that their observance should insure life and happiness; and unless any one can show, what indeed some have asserted, that the Israelites had no fixed idea of a reward and punishment hereafter, it is also evident that salvation of the soul must be included by the prophet, since no other requisite is ever spoken of or even alluded to. And that the Israelites knew of an hereafter, can also be demonstrated by various scriptural passages, all admitting of but one interpretation. When Abigail, the wife of Nabal, the Carmelite, met David to dissuade him from his intended violence against her husband, she said, among other things: "And a man rose to pursue thee and to seek thy soul; but may the soul of my Lord be bound up in the bond of life with the Lord my God." (1 Samuel xxv. 29.)—In this passage, the נפש or soul is used twice, first, with regard to the injury intended by the man Saul against David, secondly, in the blessing pronounced upon the latter. Though now the word *Naphesh* often means person, yet the phrase בקש נפש means to take life, or to separate soul and body, and it consequently has then no *material* reference; therefore, when the word is used again in the next sentence, it must needs bear the same meaning, and refer then to the spiritual soul; or in other words, Abigail prayed that the pious shepherd of Israel, whom she

addressed, might be found acceptable before the Lord his God, and be ultimately rewarded by Him with life unending, despite that now a man, distinguished and great, endeavoured to hunt him down, and to seek his death. Also in the book of Psalms, David expresses his hope of a glorious permanence in the following glowing words: "I will bless the Lord who hath counselled me; also in the dark nights, when my thoughts oppress me, have I placed the Lord ever before me; for He is at my right hand, that I cannot be moved. Therefore is glad my heart, and it rejoiceth my glory (the soul), and also my flesh (the body) will rest securely. For thou leavest not my soul to the grave. Thou wilt not suffer thy pious one to see corruption. Thou makest known to me the path of life; the fulness of the joy is before thy face, the pleasures on thy right hand are unending." (Psalm xvi. 7–11.) Also, in Psalm xxvii. 13: "Did I not believe to behold happiness from the Lord in the land of life?"—The foregoing quotations must certainly tend to prove, almost to demonstration, that the Israelites had a perfect notion, and a beautiful one too, of the true happiness which awaits the righteous, and that they expected to reach this happiness through a righteousness founded upon the execution of the so much undervalued observance of the tenets of the Mosaic religion. If now, as it must be evident, happiness and life could be reached through these means at the time of the prophets, it is apparent that, unless a limitation had been mentioned, the same means now must produce, and this inevitably so, the same results; or to state the matter so as to offer an answer to the objection raised, that God is willing and able

to save mankind unto salvation, without the intervention of a mediator or a vicarious sacrifice to be offered up as an atonement for the original sin of Adam; since a man's own righteousness, based upon an observance of the law of God, is enough to save him. By this, however, we do not mean to say, that any man can set up a measure or a quantity of righteous deeds, beyond which he need not go to insure the desired happiness; but that, if a man has done in sincerity and truth all that ever was in his power of accomplishing, he will doubtless receive the favour of that Being, whom in sincerity he has endeavoured to worship. Consequently, the doctrine maintained by us cannot be charged with the defect of a tendency to render us proud and careless; but, on the contrary, it will cause us to be circumspect and humble, since by these means alone, we will be induced to make exertions to practise whatever the Scriptures demand of us, in order to obtain the favour of the Lord, which to do has been placed altogether within our power; for, in addition to the gift of a rational soul, our God and King has given us his law for our government, by obeying which a man may live virtuously and reach life and happiness.

In the foregoing, it has been briefly shown, that the Deity is not divisible, and that, consequently, He never could have been divided; add to which, that God is a pure spirit, not liable to change or decay, not visible to, nor tangible by the senses: and it must be conceded, that the divine essence, or God himself, never could have been enclosed within a mortal body; for to have thus been mixed up with mortality would have rendered the Godhead liable to change, death,

and corruption; and then the deity, while on earth in such a body, must have been tangible, material, and visible to the eyes; and does not the prophet say: "And to whom will you compare God, and what form will you liken to him?" (Isaiah xl. 19.) But even let this pass; still if this personage did actually appear, and was really slain ignominiously to effect an atonement for mankind: what need is there for any exertion to live virtuously, since a complete atonement must have been made? And if it is contended, that the death of the Messiah was only to remove the disability to happiness which before existed: then we ask, what was the state of the righteous of former times? were they saved or not? if the first, how could they be happy with the original sin unatoned for? and if the last, how could God give them a law, the observance of which after all could not satisfy his indignation? But pass over this objection also, as more ingenious than solid: yet we ask, What are men of the present day to do to obtain felicity after their disability has been once removed? what law are they to obey? Our opponents do not say that our law is to be followed; and yet we may boldly say, that they have none of divine origin to offer in its stead. The Messiah is acknowledged to be but an agent, even grant him to be a part of the Deity: what right can he have then to abrogate the old, and institute a new law? And even grant this also: still the question recurs, Where is the new code, where is the public legislation, where is the evident manifestation of divine majesty, like the glorious descent on Sinai? The doctrines, in short, of the incarnation, of the vicarious atonement, and of the new religion in all its modifications, are all

obnoxious to the objections just indicated; and although they are so briefly stated, yet the demonstrations and proofs drawn from Holy Writ, faithfully and honestly presented, must convince every Israelite, and to these alone I address myself, that the doctrine of a plurality in the divine Author of all is blasphemous; that the doctrine of an incarnation is incompatible with the nature of God as pronounced through the mouth of the prophets; that the doctrine of an appeasing offering being requisite to satisfy God, and to enable Him to save mankind, when otherwise He would not be able, is unsupported and contradicted by Scripture; since God always announces himself as the only Redeemer and Saviour, from whom all redemption proceeds, and that all beings act under Him and are ruled by his guidance. And therefore by inference as well as by direct argument we have arrived at the conclusion, that GOD is ONE and alone, without division, without similitude; incorporeal, and therefore, intangible, and immortal; that He has never delegated his power to any other being, and without this no other power equal to Him can exist; that He has never doomed man to utter hopelessness, but that He has established statutes and ordinances which, when observed, will lead to happiness, here and hereafter.—In illustration of this, we read farther in Isaiah (xli. 4):

מי פעל ועשה קרא הדרות מראש אני ה׳ ראשון ואת אחרנים אני הוא: ישעיה מא׳ ד׳:

"Who effected and did this? who called forth the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the latest, I am the same."

These predicates and attributes belong but to the One, before whom walked our patriarch Abram, whom God called out from Ur in Chaldea, that he might become a shining light to those that dwelt in darkness; no other being there exists that shareth his glory, and none ever will be, O our God! who will rule with Thee, none can ever exist to whom Thou canst be compared; for Thou alone art God, and Thine alone will ever be the dominion and rule over all.—But yet of thy glory and of thy wisdom Thou hast bestowed on man the work of thy hands; and Thou willest that he should be happy by obeying thy precepts, and the children of Jacob Thou hast chosen to be thy beloved people. Let then, we pray Thee, thy power be again displayed, and send Thou the anointed messenger, David thy servant, whom Thou hast ordained to effect by thy assistance the restoration of thy people, who look up to Thee in their captivity, and cry unto Thee in their affliction. May this speedily come to pass, even in our days and in our lives, and may then Judah be saved and Israel dwell securely. Amen!

Heshvan 7th. } 5596.
October 30th. }

DISCOURSE XLV.

THE MESSIAH.

No. II.

In thy name, O Lord! may thy people be blessed, and may their sufferings be removed by thy mercy; and do thou cause those that are captives in the whole world, thy earth, to be gathered together on thy holy mountain, to serve Thee there, according to the commands of thy law; and may thy servant be speedily sent to rule and guide them, as the shepherd governs his flock. Amen.

Brethren!

On the subject of Messiah, which was lately offered to your consideration, it was exhibited to you that, according to the doctrines which are obviously deducible from Scripture, the person promised to be sent is not to be a divinity, nor if he were, would it be requisite for him to atone for the sins of the world. This argument was considered necessary to prove, that there was no intention to predict the advent of a being whose nature should be differing from that of man, and whose actions should have the effect of reconciling the indignant and offended Creator to his creatures. It will not be denied, that the idea of a god coming down full of love and compassion, and assuming a nature and appearance foreign to him to work an entire change in the regulation and economy

of the world, is highly poetical; but, nevertheless, it cannot become a matter of faith, one to found our belief upon, if it clashes at all with the sublime truths of the holy law, which was given to us to be actually the guide and instructor for every thing relating to the divine nature (if I may make use of so profane a word), and to the divine economy, and to the conduct of God towards man, the chief and best work of his hands. In no part of the canon of our Bible does it say, that a deity should be delegated, in no one verse is it taught in so many words that the Deity, who spoke through the prophets, would cause a division in Himself to ensue, and in no one passage does it say, that there can be no salvation except through the death of such a messenger.—The idea, in short, notwithstanding its poetical beauty, is no scriptural idea, but an invention of heathen poets, whose works teem full of reports of incarnations, and of bodily appearances of divinities on the earth, and of divisions of the gods, and of progenies and children of these gods, some of whom were classed among the immortals, others again among those liable to change and corruption.—We cannot deny, that many passages in the Bible have been tortured to show a delegation of the divine holiness to another; but still we do maintain that without unfair reasoning not a single passage bears a direct and evident interpretation to this effect; and, moreover, we contend that, if it were true that in such a faith our whole salvation depended, it would not have been indicated in an obscure wording, but in a direct announcement like the first precept in the Decalogue, "I am the everlasting One, thy God, who have brought thee out of

the land of Egypt," where the evident and direct words leave no room for doubt or uncertainty.

Much has been written and said on the subject of this our difference from other sects; but the books and arguments are not accessible to many, besides which they are mostly stated in too learned a way to become generally useful. I therefore, propose to devote some little time to the elucidation of several texts, before I proceed to unfold our views of the nature and object of the Messiah.—At the same time, I must do myself the justice to state, that although I thus undertake to attack, to a certain extent, the opinions of the majority of the people among whom we live: it is not done for the sake of making a display of our own views to those entertaining contrary opinions, but solely to instruct those among us who may entertain doubts, or be not well informed, on this subject, as to what is generally thought thereof by Jews, and to enable them, in some measure, to give reasonable answers, when they are asked for the reasons of their faith. It is a long time already since these considerations were presented to my mind; but never, until now, could I resolve to speak of them in a public address. To be altogether silent—permit me to remark—would appear, as though we Jews had not the courage to speak of things pertaining to our religion in our own assemblies. Now, although it is abhorrent to all correct sentiment to attack others, or to wound their feelings in so essential a point as religion: still would that cowardice be much more blameworthy which would prevent Jews from speaking of their own laws in their own assemblies, in a country, where equal rights are guaranteed to all

the inhabitants by the constitution and the laws of the land. Whilst we, therefore, concede to every sect the right of temperately discussing any thing relating to their own and even to our persuasion: we also claim and have the same right; and, if temperately exercised, no one can, and no one ought, to complain. Complaisance and forbearance are, truly speaking, great virtues, which ought to be strictly cultivated; but their exercise should never degrade them into the kindred vices of affected politeness and meanness; and better far would it be were our mouths stopped by the violent arm of arbitrary rule, than that we should surrender tamely to worldly expediency what we refused to yield amidst the heavy persecutions we had to encounter—I mean the right of honestly believing the truth and of boldly expressing what we believe. And let me add, that if we once submit, and give up tacitly this precious right of expounding our laws according to our received opinions: the enemies of Judaism will have achieved a victory for which they have so long striven in vain; as they will thus have succeeded to make the laws of God by degrees forgotten by us, and the next step would then be of easy attainment; for, when our ordinances are forgotten, theirs will be readily substituted in their place, and Israel, which God in his mercy forefend, will have ceased to be a nation. But there lives that One above who will prevent such a calamity, and that time will never arrive which shall witness the quenching of the glorious light, which has been ordained the guiding star of all mankind! —I fear that I have said already too much; since no apology for the discussion proposed is necessary

to justify myself towards any Israelite, and I doubt whether any can at all be looked for by one who does not believe with us. Let us, therefore, without farther preface, proceed to the illustration of the various texts upon which our opponents rely as a justification of their doctrines; and I have only to remark, that I shall not go over the whole ground, but merely select a few of the most prominent, believing that it will be easy for any one to explain the Bible-texts to himself, if he has been made acquainted with the interpretation of a few selected from various parts of Scripture.

Some persons have fancied that they could discover in the phraseology of the Bible an allusion to a plurality in the Deity; among the rest, the text in the first chapter of Genesis: "And God said, We will make man in our image, in our likeness, and he shall rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of heaven, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creeping things that move on the earth." "And God said, We will make man," it is alleged, refers to a plurality in the Deity, say father, son, and ghost, who consulted and agreed to make the creature called man after the image of God: first, in the nature and constitution of his soul, and also, measurably, of the body, since the son of God took the body of man; secondly, in his place and authority; and, lastly, in his purity and rectitude. That a construction of the verse in question should at all be used to prove a plurality in the Deity is a matter of surprise; but surely a consultation and agreement in the persons, were any existing, of the Godhead, can in nowise be inferred. To the definition of the words "image and likeness" as just exhibited, which, by

the way, was given in the very words of a work in great authority among the Nazarenes, we could make but little objection, except with regard to the body of man having been dignified by an assumption of it by a part of the Deity, which we deny as having taken place, and, consequently, cannot think it implied under the words "image and likeness."—It strikes me, that the whole difficulty of explaining the verse we have quoted can be removed, if we consider, that the Hebrew, as well as every other language, I believe, has words which have a *plural* form, and yet are, in their signification, *singular*. Now, in construing a word of this kind, the writer may employ the verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and nouns, referring to it, either in the singular, according to its signification, or in the plural, according to its form. The whole, then resolves itself into a grammatical construction of a sentence; and if no rule of propriety is thereby violated, and if the meaning is not rendered ambiguous or uncertain, the singular and plural both are employed in Hebrew alternately, as can be shown by examples taken from the only remains of the Hebrew, which are found, as all know, in the Bible solely.—The term אלהים, which is commonly rendered *God*, is one of this class of words, and has the appearance of a plural, though actually a singular. Many reasons and explanations have been given why the plural form should be employed to designate the Deity; but it must be observed that is not by any means the only name applied to God in our holy language, but is one of the many which have been given to Him, and is like them expressive of some particular quality inherent in Him. So we call Him אל שדי the All-suffi-

cient, because He is able to accomplish every thing which He may desire; בורא or Creator, because He alone produced existence out of non-existence, a material world out of nothing; כל יכול* the Almighty, because his power is universal, and his kingdom extends over all; farther אל God, or, more properly speaking, the Power, because to Him all power appertaineth, and to Him all are accountable. Many other names expressive of his glory belong also to Him; but it is foreign to our purpose to enumerate them, and we must therefore conclude the number by adding the last term by which He revealed himself to our forefathers, and particularly to Moses, the name which expresses his essence to be permanent, ever being, never ending; profane lips, like ours, must not utter the ineffable word, but it declares God as the eternal One, who ever was, always is, and ever will be, without change, without division. It will be perceived, from an inspection of the Bible, that not one of the names, just enumerated, is ever found in the plural either of termination or signification, but always in the singular, without a solitary exception. Now, it appears to me, if I dare to give an expression to my ideas, without having the support of any commentator known to me, that the word אלהים is the plural of אל in its signification of *power*, and should accordingly be rendered the *powers*, and as applied to God, He in whom all powers are centred. To prove the plausibility of this interpretation is perfectly

* This term is not found in the Bible, still it is expressive of the divine ability to accomplish all, and is therefore here inserted with the others. The Biblical term is אל עליון Most High God.

easy; for the word *elohim* very often is applied to men to denote *chief* or judge, either in singular or plural, and also to false deities, again either singular or plural. In fact, whenever the word God receives suffixes in Hebrew, the plural form is almost invariably adopted with but few exceptions. To those who are unacquainted with the Hebrew grammar I offer, as an explanation, that those words, which are termed in English *possessive* pronouns, or pronouns denoting possession, are expressed in Hebrew, not by entire words, but by letters or syllables attached to the end of the word to which they refer, and these so-called suffixes are differently attached to the plural from the singular. I hope this brief explanation is sufficiently intelligible, and assuming it to be so, let us continue the argument. The plural suffixes are used with the plural-looking elohim, even if denoting a single idol, as we read in the address of Jephtha to the king of the Ammonites (Judges xi. 24): "Behold that which thy god אלהיך Kemosh giveth thee to inherit, that only thou mayest possess, and that which the Lord our God hath driven out before us, that even we will possess." In this passage no one can say, with any show of reason, that the word אלהיך refers to any other than one idol, since his name is mentioned, namely, Kemosh; and when, in the second part of the verse, אלהינו is used, it certainly cannot mean any thing else save the *one* God, not a plurality, and refers therefore to the Lord Eternal, whom the Israelites call their God.—Without one word more added to what has just been said, the argument appears to me perfectly conclusive; but we may carry the illustration, for the sake of greater clearness, a

little farther. The plural, in connexion with the Deity, is used in but few other passages, the whole number amounting to but six,* besides the one under consideration, as far as I can recollect at the present moment, and I very much doubt whether any more can be found; and in explaining them we must be struck with the little authority they can give to a belief in a divided deity.—The first is in Genesis iii. 22, immediately after the account of Adam's fall: "And (He) the Lord God said, Behold the man is become like one of us, to know good and evil." Here "like *one* of *us*" is employed to convey the idea that man had acquired a degree of knowledge of good and evil superior to what he had before. Immediately thereafter we read, that God placed angels, named cherubim, to guard the entrance of the garden, to prevent the re-entrance of man. Is it not now more than probable, that in the mighty assembly of his ministers, who, as the prophets say, surround his glory, the Almighty thus spoke: "Behold man has now become like one of us (here assembled), to distinguish between good and evil?" And it then means, that Adam had actually reached that knowledge which the serpent had foretold to Eve, saying: "And you will become like elohim (properly rendered divine beings or angels, to distinguish them from Adam or

* Since writing the above, I have found at least one more example of the kind spoken of in the text (2 Samuel vii. 23), which however refers to an idol, or any thing acknowledged as god, and yet in the continuation the *pronoun* referring to it is used in the singular.—I do not recollect any more similar passages above referred to; but I have no doubt, that, if any should be found, the explanations given in the text will be enough to explain them.

sons of earth,) knowing good and evil." Adam and Eve had accordingly seen this truly verified, but, alas! their innocence too had fled with their ignorance, and they had offended God by seeking to dive farther than his command had permitted them. The doctrine of the plurality, you will see, is nowise benefitted by this passage; for acknowledging that it is after all, like the whole account of the temptation, awfully mysterious, since it refers to a state of things of which we can, from our altered state, form no conception: we may yet claim that our explanation bears the evident marks of orthodoxy, which can be farther proved by a reference to the vision of Micaiah son of Yimlah, which you can find in the twenty-second chapter of the 1st Kings, beginning with verse 19.

The second passage is also in Genesis (chap. xi. 7). Speaking of the building of the Babylonian tower, God is represented as saying: "Come on, let *us* descend, and let us mix there their language, that one may not understand the speech of the other." If the explanation of the last-quoted passage has appeared reasonable, then this one must and ought to be similarly explained; but after all, it may be taken as a mere soliloquy of God, expressive of his intentions. But, if I may urge my views, I would respectfully refer to where God, in speaking immediately to Abraham of his intentions to subvert Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis xviii. 21), says: "I will now descend and see," where the singular is used, because the person addressed being mortal could not become a party in the transaction, nor be employed as the agent, and God therefore simply announced to him the intention He entertained of, as it were, descending unto the

regions of the earth, and to investigate the reported misconduct of the cities of the plain. And when again we find God speaking in the heavenly council of his ministering seraphim (Isaiah vi. 8), we read: "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? and I said, Here I am, do Thou send me."—Has our interpretation been thus clearly established?—I hope so; but more amplification would show it better, yet I am admonished by the time already consumed not to dilate too largely, although the subject is, to me at least, so highly interesting.

The third instance is found again in Genesis xx. 13, where Abraham speaks of God having caused him to wander away from his father's house, and uses the verb in plural, which can be justified on the ground laid down, that a noun having a plural termination, though a singular meaning, may have the verb agreeing with it, either according to the termination or the sense; and if this is not satisfactory, we may say that Abraham, perhaps, in addressing a heathen king who knew not exactly the true worship, used the language customary in the country, without thereby intending to convey the idea of a plurality in the Deity. At all events, any arguments from this verse in favour of such a doctrine must be too far-fetched to bear any authority whatever.

The fourth example is also in Genesis, in the history of Jacob (chap. xxxv. 7): "And he built there an altar, and he called the place, 'The God of Bethel;' for there had appeared to him the *elohim*, when he fled before his brother." Here the word elohim is again employed as a plural; still, this passage, of all

yet quoted the most favourable to our opponents, will be found, upon examination, to afford them no tenable ground. For, upon referring to the event alluded to, we read in the account of Jacob's dream (Genesis xxviii. 12): "And he dreamt, and behold a ladder was standing on the earth, and its top was reaching heavenward, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." What then did Jacob see in his dream at Bethel, when he fled before his brother —a multitude, or one being only?—a multitude surely; —but what constituted this multitude, divinities or creatures?—creatures surely, although of the highest order; and they were sent by God to comfort him in his trouble, when sleep had weighed down his eyelids, while he was reposing on the flinty rock for a pillow; and among this host of ministers also appeared the Creator, who in his own glory comforted and assured his servant by promising him his protection. But does elohim mean angels? certainly; for after the angel had disappeared from the eyes of Manoah and his wife, the former said: "We must die, for we have seen an elohim," meaning an angelic being, for immediately before we are told, "Then knew Manoah that he was an angel of the Lord." And Manoah's wife too, better informed perhaps, at all events better judging, answered: "If the Lord had wished to slay us, He would not have accepted from our hand burnt and meat-offering, and would not have let us see all this, nor at this time have suffered us to hear like that we have heard." (Judges xiii. 21–23.) The explanation here attempted is perfectly rational, and will, I trust, be enough to clear away the seeming difficulty of this passage, and the plural is then only used to

refer to the multitude of angels that appeared to Jacob in his dream.

The fifth example is found in Joshua xxiv. 19, and constitutes a part of the address of this great leader to the Israelites before his death. He says; "You may not be able to serve the Lord, for He is the holy Gods." I have rendered the words *Elohim kedoshim* literally, as though they referred actually to a plural number; but who does not see that the singular "*He is*" is fatal to the assumption of the idea of a plurality being actually entertained? and, to give a rational commentary, we must say, that Joshua employed again the grammatical license of considering the word elohim both according to its nature and appearance, and therefore he uses the adjective in the plural to agree with the latter, and the pronoun in the singular to refer to the former.

The sixth example we have in Isaiah vi., and has already been explained, and I hope that conviction has been wrought to demonstrate, that no reliance whatever can be placed upon an argument founded upon few plural constructions of the word Elohim, especially as the doctrine plainly taught to us says that the Lord our God (*Elohim*) is ONE.—In addition to the foregoing, it must be borne in mind, that there are a number of other words in Hebrew (like in most other languages, as has been mentioned already) which are used as plurals, although having singular meanings, among which we may enumerate פנים face, נעורים youth, מים water, שמים heaven, and many others which, having no singular form, are always construed as plurals, although often applied to individual things. The argument which has been drawn from the verse

quoted from the first chapter of Genesis, therefore, appears so weak upon a calm review, as hardly to merit a refutation; but as it is so constantly repeated and pressed on our view, I hope the time will not be considered by you, my brethren, as misspent, which has been devoted to its overthrow. In dismissing this subject for the present I have only to add, that but little exception would ever have been taken to the verse "Let us make man," had it not been, that in accordance with the doctrines of the heathens the plurality of the deity had been promulgated by a sect deriving their faith and their laws from our holy code, only with such exceptions as would tend to make them more pleasant and easy to the larger mass of Adam's descendants, who might not wish to be bound down by abstract ideas, which they had not the ripe intelligence to understand, and a multiplicity of ceremonial observances of which they knew not the meaning.—And of all the abstract tenets of our Heaven-born religion, against which the heathens most strove, and which was ever the most unintelligible to their besotted minds, the belief in one God, undivided and immutable, must be preëminently distinguished; since the very simplicity of this faith was to them quite incomprehensible; for there, where their priests most pretended to mysteries and secrecy, our teachers were candid and open; hence those of our nation, who brought a reformed religion to these heathens, retained a multiplicity of the deity, whilst in conformity with their own belief they promulgated the worship of the one God.

The idea of a saving redeemer to die for the sins of the world, the Nazarenes maintain, is taught in

Genesis iii. 15, where we read as a continuation of the curse upon the serpent: "And enmity I will put between thee and between the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thee in the head, and thou shalt wound him in the heel." This verse is so explained to favour the idea of the atonement so often already alluded to: "Enmity should arise between Satan or the devil, who had entered the body of the serpent to tempt Eve, and between the woman and her race; still the seed of the woman, meaning the god-man, should ultimately overcome the power of Satan, but he should thereby suffer the loss of his material life, which is represented under the words of 'he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt wound his heels.'"—This explanation is according to the opinion entertained by a vast majority of the followers of the new creed; a majority, I say, for there is among them a great multitude who differ very widely in their doctrines from the majority. But it needs not much sagacity to see, that this mode of commenting would lead to making the Bible-text mean any thing or nothing. If it is offered as a mere accommodation of certain views to this or any other text, we can have but small objection to make; for then it would amount to no more than seeking a mere parallel in words the real obvious meaning of which is something very different; and such fanciful construction can in nowise serve as argument.—But, if the doctrines so fancifully supported are forced upon us as of fundamental importance, and as proved by the holy Text: then, indeed we must solemnly protest against any such assumption.—It must however be evident, that the curse was levelled against the veri-

table serpent, the so-called snake, which in truth now has the qualities denounced in the curse. How this serpent could have spoken and tempted our first parents is indeed more than, I believe, any man is able to tell precisely, and we must reckon the whole account amongst those mysteries into which our research cannot fully penetrate. But we have the Bible as our warrant for believing that, allured in an extraordinary manner, and greatly prompted by curiosity, Eve tasted the forbidden fruit, and Adam by her tempted, sinned with her. In his indignation, coupled with mercy, the Almighty called our parents, who had forfeited their life, to an account for their misconduct, and ordained their punishment, and also that of their original tempter. Before their sin there was no death, and the lion therefore slew not the innocent steer, the wolf devoured not the harmless lamb, the kite's destructive talons dealt not death to the hen and her brood, not in circling eddies pursued his prey the eagle, nor in the cleft of the barren rock lay the coils of the poisonous viper. But sin changed the harmony of nature; and the beasts of the field broke their truce with man, and those that had hitherto been harmless and playful now strode abroad with the eager desire for slaughter, armed with the voracious mouth, with the sharpened talon, or with the destroying, withering fang: and thus the former companions, and among them the tempting, glowing, beautiful serpent, became the enemies and terror of man. Still, though hated, his dominion was not to cease over God's creation, and, therefore, power was left him to crush the serpent's head, literally crush it, although the latter was armed

for deadly strife. Where in this is there any evident allusion to a redeeming Messiah? We pause for an answer. Now, we will even grant, that in this denunciation of the tempter God had an allusion to the power of man over sin: still, what reference can that have to the Nazarene doctrine of a redeemer, who is to be both god and man?—And to illustrate our subject more clearly, and to show that our view is supported by other texts in the Bible, and that it is sin only which exposes us to the enmity of the beasts of the field, but that virtue will remove the danger, let us refer to the sublime Psalm, written by the prophet Moses, and the man who best knew the ways of God with man. It is in the Psalm xci. 10–13, we read: "No evil shall befal thee, and no plague shall approach thy tent. For his angels will He give charge concerning thee to guard thee in all thy ways. On hands shall they bear thee, that thou mayest not dash against a stone thy foot. On leopard and adder shalt thou tread, thou shalt tread down the lion's whelp and serpent." It is thus seen that sin arms nature against us, and by virtue we obtain peace; and this is the doctrine which is taught also in Gen. iii. 15.

The elucidation of these two points has unexpectedly detained us so long, that for to-day it will not be practicable to go through the whole important subjects in dispute, and time, therefore, is left us to speak of but one more.—In the blessing given to Abram, when God ordered him to leave his father's house, we read among others (Genesis xii. 3) the following: "And I will bless those that bless thee, and him that curses thee, I will curse, and through thee all families

of the earth shall be blest." Were any one to read for the first time this annunciation of happiness, he never would imagine that any other than the Patriarch himself is spoken of, and those immediately connected with him by family descent. But no, this simple and obvious mode of commenting on the Text is not satisfactory to our Nazarene interpreters, and they again make this passage also subservient to an announcement of the coming of their messiah. They accordingly say: "That this crowning blessing refers to the messiah the divinity, 1, in whom only all that are blessed are blessed; 2, in whom all that believe, of whatever family they may be, are blessed; 3, in whom some of all nations are blessed; 4, since there are some blessings, such as the new law propagated under his name, which are common to all mankind." I again extract almost *verbatim*, from the book of high authority already referred to, and consequently the argument is fairly stated. Now we have no objection to admit that the Messiah whom we expect is to be the crowning blessing, perhaps he also may have been alluded to in the promise made to Abraham, as also our sages teach: "The Messiah's name was created before this earth was made." But that, nevertheless, Abram himself and all Israel his descendants are at least included, is evident, *first* from the very context of which the verse quoted makes a part. *Secondly*, from the blessing given to Isaac, "And I will multiply thy descendants like the stars of heaven, and I will give to thy descendants all these lands; and there shall bless themselves in (or through) thy descendants all the nations of the earth" (Gen. xxvi. 4).

And *lastly*, the promise to Jacob, from the portion read this day, as the day's lecture:

והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ ופרצת ימה וקדמה וצפנה ונגבה ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה ובזרעך :

בר׳ כח׳ יד׳ :

"And thy descendants shall be as numerous as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread out to the East, the West, the North, and the South, and in thee and in thy seed all the families of the earth shall be blest." Gen. xxviii. 14.

Can any words more plainly say, that the seed spoken of shall not be only one individual, but a people, a numerous people, who shall proclaim the glory of God in the heathens' lands? And who are this people? who but the children in the flesh, as well as spirit, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom God made his covenant known?—True, these descendants now are despised, their countenance is marred, their wisdom slighted; but who knows not that arrive will that bright day, when their light will indeed shine, when from them teachers will go out and proclaim God's name to the far islands of the sea?—The time is delayed, because of our sins, but come it will, and then God will be declared One, and his name will be One.

Do Thou our Father! hasten this time, for to Thee are our eyes directed; and do Thou comfort those that mourn for their sins, and seek salvation in Thee only, who art our Father, King, and Redeemer! Amen.

Kislev 6th. } 5596.
Nov. 26th. }

DISCOURSE XLVI.

THE MESSIAH.

No. III.

Remember us, O Lord! in thy kindness, and have mercy upon us, the erring and scattered flock, and raise unto us a shepherd, who shall guide us in thy holy name, and send unto us a prophet who shall again instruct us of thy will. Cause us, also, to behold thy glory, when Thou again wilt dwell before our eyes in Jerusalem, thy holy city, as in days of old and as in years of former times. Amen.

Brethren!

If one were to form his ideas of prophecy from the vague assertions which are constantly hazarded respecting it: he would assuredly never arrive at any satisfactory knowledge concerning this great fund of divine wisdom, which God in his kindness transmitted to us through a long succession of holy and inspired men, who went out, and spoke, and wrought awful things, by and through his sacred name and power. To believe every thing, therefore, which is alleged to be founded on prophecy would be to believe absurdities and contradictions innumerable; for the recklessness of false interpreters has dared to invade even this sanctuary of God, and to fortify their errors and falsities by arguments deduced therefrom. It is accordingly the manifest duty of every Israelite, who

truly confides in the faith in which his forefathers believed, lived, suffered, and died, to arrive at a certain and fixed knowledge of the dogmas on which his belief is founded, and to endeavour to attain a sufficient understanding of the sacred Text, to be able at one glance to distinguish the false from the true, the evil from the good, the absurd from the reasonable. In short, ignorance of his religion and its tenets is, in a Jew, a positive crime, which nothing but an inability to arrive at knowledge can in the least excuse. And in the same measure as knowledge derivable from instruction conveyed by others is difficult of access to any man, he is bound to search the Scriptures for himself, and, with an humble diffidence in his own power of discernment, to proceed upon the principles which have been handed down to us, and which are so widely and universally disseminated, that hardly any one, called an Israelite, can be absolutely ignorant of the whole of them, unless he never has enjoyed the blessings of converse and intercourse with his brethren in faith.—It being thus admitted that every one ought to learn, it follows as a natural consequence that every one, capable of teaching, should endeavour to disseminate the knowledge that is within him, to propagate as far as in him lies, and to perpetuate to the extent of his abilities, the knowledge and the love of the truth, which is at last the same with the knowledge and love of God, since the God to whom Israel bend in submission, since the Lord whom we worship, is Himself the TRUTH.

In furtherance of this object let us revert to the exposition of prophecies applied by our opponents to fortify their doctrines of the Messiah in opposition to

ours. A variety of passages referring to the alleged plurality of the deity and to a saving redeemer has already been expounded, and it has been shown that no literal explanation will warrant the doctrines alleged to be drawn from them, and a fanciful commentary can never, and ought never, to be taken, or even urged as argument. The number of similar passages being very great, it would no doubt be useful to go over the whole ground; but it is time that a connected view should be concisely exhibited, and the subject speedily closed. I am therefore compelled to select but a few more, and leave the remainder for some future and more fitting opportunity. To proceed however without farther preface, I must draw your attention to the fact that the Nazarenes of every degree have entertained as a favourite notion, that the time of the advent of the Messiah was so distinctly pointed out, that his appearance at a certain stated and fixed period was absolutely necessary to verify the predictions relating to him.—Predictions, therefore, have been selected, and many and varied arguments have been adduced to prove, that they have been fulfilled to the letter at a certain given period in bygone times.—One of the most favourite of this kind is found in Genesis xlix. 10:

לֹא יָסוּר שֵׁבֶט מִיהוּדָה וּמְחֹקֵק מִבֵּן רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי יָבֹא שִׁילֹה וְלוֹ יִקְּהַת עַמִּים: בראשית מט׳ י׳:

which is rendered:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

The interpretation of this translation is so given by the Nazarenes: The kingdom when once given to Judah, which was accomplished in the person of David, son of Jessé, a resident of Bethlehem, in Judah, should never depart from the tribe of Judah or from those immediately connected with it, till the time that Shiloh shall come, to whom the nations should assemble; but immediately before his coming the kingdom should cease, which, it is said farther, was accomplished at the accession of Herod, of Edumean descent, at the downfall of Hyrcanus the Second, the last of the Asmonean princes. And very often indeed has this prophecy of Jacob been triumphantly advanced, together with the assertion, that, since the Israelitish kingdom is extinct, therefore the Messiah must have come.—But in answer to this bold affirmation, even allowing that there should be no error in the common Bible-translation as adopted by all Nazarenes, we must as boldly maintain that the alleged fulfilment tallies in nowise with the Text; and, strange as it may appear, that an assertion of so many learned and philosophical men should be totally erroneous, the fact is nevertheless so. In the first place, if Jacob meant to say, that Judah's descendants should *always* be the chiefs of the nation of Israel, then the prophecy never was fulfilled; for, up to the time of David, at least six hundred years from Jacob's departure, there was no preëminent prince from Judah's tribe. But grant that the meaning should be, that from the commencement of the kingdom it should never cease till the coming of the Messiah: then he ought to have come, according to the most moderate calculation, four hundred years

before the alleged advent, or according to some chronologists, six hundred years. For, when Zedekiah was captured by the Chaldeans after his flight from Jerusalem, the kingdom of Judah actually ceased; and no history that I know of has left us any record, that any other king from the family of David ever reigned, even for one single day, over the restored Jews, including Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, much less over the hitherto never restored kingdom of Israel. And to say, that the rule of satraps under the Persian tutelage and dominion can be called the wielding of the sceptre implied in the prophecy, is evidently using a standard of criticism not applicable to Scripture; and, farther, to say that the kingdom of the Asmonean princes, who were descendants of Aaron, and consequently not belonging to the tribe of Judah, was also in accordance with the prophecy, is perfectly absurd; for the blessing was addressed to Judah only and not to Levi inclusive, and therefore it is not possible to suppose that the fulfilment in the persons of Levi's descendants could at all verify the prediction with regard to Judah. And for that matter, since Herod was a professing Jew, as nearly all the people called Edumeans were in those days: he might have been included in the prediction according to the above latitudinarian exposition (for, according to our laws, the proselyte is equal with the native son of Israel), if such an explanation had suited the Nazarene creed. If then this prophecy meant that Messiah must come as soon as Judah's sceptre be broken, Zedekiah's flight ought to have been the time; and therefore, if the argument is good against our hopes of a coming Messiah, it is good also against the belief of those

differing from us, as has been amply shown, and I doubt whether evasions ever so subtle will be able to countervail the plain reasoning just exhibited. But, it is likely, highly likely, that the common version is incorrect, and accordingly a translation has been given by various persons of our people and those agreeing with them, which gives the prophecy quite a different appearance, and it is then perfectly reconcilable both to prophecy and history. The difference depends upon the meaning of the two particles עד כי which when united as one compound mean *until that;* but עד by itself is often applied to designate eternity, and should then be rendered with *for ever;* and כי by itself means *because*, *for*, *inasmuch*, or, in short, is a particle denoting the consequence of an antecedent sentence. If then we sever these words and connect one with the first, and the other with the second part of the verse, it should be rendered thus: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, and the lawgiver not from between his feet (that is, from his descendants) for ever, inasmuch as the Shiloh shall come, and to him shall be the assemblage of the nations." If this interpretation is correct, and it is certainly perfectly reconcilable to the Hebrew* idiom: Jacob meant to say, that Judah should be the chief tribe, which indeed it was, both in the number and the bravery of its men; that from it should go out the rulers of the nation; and that, if ever through the means of transgressions the kingdom should be

* The accent on עד is a *disjunctive*, which would evidently imply, that, according to the Massoratists, it is not connected with the word כי.

removed for a time, the removal should not be everlasting; for the king Messiah should arise, to whom all nations are to assemble to learn of him the laws of God, in which they are to walk, and which they are all ultimately to obey. It would appear from this, that the chief excellence which Judah was to have above his brothers, over Reuben, because he had grievously sinned, and over Simeon and Levi, because by their headstrong violence they had grieved their father and done injustice to others, and over the others because over them he had the right of prior birth, was to consist in the descent of the Messiah from his family, in whom the kingdom and the legislation were for ever to remain, and who was to be the harbinger of peace and knowledge to all mankind. We merely wish to ask, has such a personage, uniting these qualities, ever been known on earth? and where then is the hopelessness which the world says is ours in looking forward for his coming?

Having said thus much already in elucidation of this verse, it is with extreme diffidence that I venture to offer views of my own on the subject, especially as I am ignorant whether I am supported in them by others or not.—But trusting that the matter has also a considerable share of interest for you, my brethren, I will even continue, and throw myself on your indulgence for detaining you longer on this point, than may seem at first sight necessary.—In looking over the Scriptures with reference to the doctrines of the Messiah, I have been so struck with the extreme unity of agreement of the various prophets, as to amount to astonishment. Much as I had read before, often as I had studied the oracles of our faith: I yet

found new cause for admiration over the extreme beauty and harmony discoverable in the scheme of revelation which we possess, and I was filled with thankfulness, that we have been permitted to inherit such a store of rich blessings, full of wisdom and consolation. Long before our times, said a sacred singer: "Had not thy law been my entertainment, I long since would have perished in my misery;" and well may Israel collectively say now what the holy seer exclaimed in bygone days, when the spirit of prophecy was yet rife on earth. In judging therefore of any one passage which may be presented to us, we must not regard it as one isolated sentence, but as a part of a great scheme, with which it must, and undoubtedly does, agree. If then we even admit, that the received version of the Nazarenes is correct, it certainly will not militate against our religion. For, the verse in question contains a twofold promise: of the *sceptre*, and the *lawgiver*, or rather *law-dispenser*. It would accordingly mean, that both, the kingdom and the dispensation of the divine law, should never be at the same time taken from Judah's descendants, up to the time when Messiah should hold universal dominion over the earth. And thus the kingdom conferred on Judah shall never cease; and though Judah's immediate descendants did not at once hold the sway, yet at a later period David was chosen, and in him began the commencement of the fulfilment; and with regard to the continuance thereof after a suspension (understand a suspension, but not an abolition) of the kingdom we have an ample account in the book of the prophecies of Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived during the reigns of the latter kings of Judah,

when the wickedness of the people had rendered them ripe for destruction; he was accordingly deputed to predict the death or downfall of three kings: Jehojakim, Jochoniah, and Zedekiah, through the king of the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar. After stating the utter subversion of the kingdom of Judah, and testifying against Jochoniah that none of his descendants should ever rule over the land of Israel, he continues (xxxiii. 7) as follows: "And I will bring back the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel, and I will build them up as at the first." And in verse 14, we read in continuation: "Behold days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will fulfil that good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and concerning the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time I will cause to grow unto David the sprout of righteousness, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be helped, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety, and this is what she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. For thus hath said the Lord, There shall never be wanting unto David a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel: and unto the priests the Levites there shall not be wanting a man before me, to offer burnt-offerings, and to burn meat-offering, and to prepare sacrifices at all times." In the same manner too spoke Hosea (iii. 4, 5): "For many days shall Israel abide without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without a standing image, and without an ephod and theraphim. After that will the children of Israel return and seek for the Lord their God, and David their king; and fearing will they hasten to the Lord and his goodness in

the latter days." Also to David it was said by Nathan the prophet (2 Samuel vii. 16): "And thy house and thy kingdom shall be steadfast for ever before me; thy throne shall be established for ever." These extracts will give us a convincing commentary on Jacob's prophecy, and all tend to show that the suspension of the kingdom during the long-endured captivity does not indicate that the reign of Judah is over; on the contrary they prove that the time will come, when the captives of Judah and Israel will all be gathered, and over them shall rule the king descended from David; and to quiet the fears which some might entertain at the length of the captivity and the threatened extinction of David's line, the Lord promised that never should that time arrive, when there should be wanting a man to David, capable of holding sway; for He distinctly stated, at the very time that both kingdom and temple ceased, when both chief and priest were banished, that Aaron no less than David should always be blessed with capable successors, ready and able to tread in their fathers' footsteps. Although, therefore, the regular tables of descent have been lost in the long course of persecutions: there are yet numbers who boast of a descent from David, and thousands there are, whom the universal voice of Israel hails as the offspring of Aaron, the Lord's anointed, and at all festivals the priestly blessings are dispensed by those who are sanctified with the commands given to the father of all the priests.— And lastly, with regard to the lawgivers and those to whom the law of God is familiar, we may simply state, that at no time has the lawgiver been removed from the feet of Judah; for never yet was that time,

when the law had not its friends, cultivators, and expounders. And in the same spirit spoke Isaiah (lix. 21): "And my covenant with them is this, saith the Lord, My spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, and out of the mouth of thy children, and out of the mouth of thy children's children, saith the Lord, from now and for ever." This prediction has certainly been accomplished; and more yet, the descendants of Judah are at the present moment constituting the greatest part of the Jews, and moreover the descendants of David are not extinct. Furthermore, the suspension of the kingly rule was according to the prophecies, and to avenge the many crimes of the Israelites: what contradiction does our belief then offer to the prophecy of Jacob? or rather are not our hope, and our belief, and the foretelling of our prophets of a later period confirmatory of, and conformable to, and best explaining, the closing inspiration of the dying Israel?—Assuredly, brethren, and it requires a hardihood, not very enviable in the possessor, to assert, that we are feeding on a vain hope and indulging in a fruitless longing.—On the contrary, our trust is firmly placed—placed on the word of Him who does not err, and all whose ways are just and true!

Having dismissed this subject, although much could have been added which would have the stronger confirmed our views of a redeemer yet to come: we will now turn to chapter xviii. of Deuteronomy, beginning at verse 14.—We read there as follows: "For those nations, which thou shalt drive out, listen unto observers of time and diviners; but as for thee, the Lord

thy God hath not suffered thee to do the like. A prophet from among thyself, from thy own brethren, like unto me, will the Lord thy God raise up unto thee; to him ye shall hearken." When we consider to whom Moses spoke, and what He knew himself to be: it is wonderful and surpassing strange, how any one could apply so plain a passage, not to a prophet, but to a redeeming Messiah. And more wonderful still it is, that the Nazarenes of every shade and complexion refer to it, as a convincing argument in favour of their assumed theory. To enable you, however, to judge of the fairness of the interpretation, adopted by the people referred to, I will now lay before you an abstract of the favourite work,* already spoken of on a former occasion. These are the words: "Some think it is the promise of a succession of prophets, that should for many ages be kept up in Israel.—These prophets were like unto Moses, though far inferior to him, Deut. xxxiv. 10.—Whether a succession of prophets be included in this promise or not, we are sure that it is primarily intended as a promise of Messiah, and it is the clearest promise of him that is in all the law of Moses."—"Observe," continues this writer, "what it is, that is here promised concerning Messiah; what God promised Moses at Mount Sinai, which he relates, verse 18, which he promised the people, verse 15, in God's name; 1. That there should come a prophet, great above all the prophets, by whom God would make known himself and his will to the children of men, more fully and clearly than ever he had done before. He is *the light of the world*, as proph-

* Matthew Henry's Commentaries.

ecy was of the Jewish church. 2. That God would *raise him up from the midst of them.* In his birth he should be one of that nation. In his resurrection he should be *raised up at Jerusalem*, and from thence his doctrine should go forth to all the world.—3. That he should be a prophet like unto Moses, only as much above him, as the other prophets came short of him.—4. That God would *put his words in his mouth*, verse 18. What messages God had to send to the children of men, he would send by him, and give him full instructions what to say and do as a prophet."—It is needless to extract any farther, having in the foregoing exhibited the entire strength of the argument. Now, I am unable to perceive what we can lose by even admitting the construction thus falsely placed on Moses's prophecy; for granting it perfectly correct and legitimate, we might still say and aver, that we expected the fulfilment as yet to come. But, much as we might gladly refer this annunciation to the great messenger, to whose coming Israel has ever looked forward with hope and with prayer: candour and truth compel us to discard such an explanation; since the whole context plainly shows, that by the successors of Moses are understood those men, who promulgated, after the great teacher's demise, the law and knowledge of God, and to no one else. What was it the Israelites had asked at Horeb? It was that, not desiring any more to see themselves the glory of God evidently revealed, fearing to die in case a public legislation, like that on Sinai, were repeated, they wished for a mediator to announce to them in future the will of God, and that they would be willing to obey the commands thus given through an agent,

as much as those announced to them by the Lord himself. God having once given them in his honour and glory the standard of the *ten precepts*, upon which He wished to found the entire code of laws He intended promulgating, was satisfied with this request; He ordered, therefore, the people to return home to their usual occupations, but told Moses to remain on the mount, to be farther instructed of the ways and will of his Maker. What, now, was the request of Israel? not for a redeemer to save their souls, or to go abroad to give light unto the heathens, not for a mediator to die for their transgressions and to atone for the sin of Adam; but simply for one or more persons, human beings, to let them know whatever might be God's wish and will. In granting them this reasonable request, the answer ought evidently be like the question; and consequently God granted what the people asked: they asked for a teacher, and a teacher was vouchsafed. Moses, the first prophet in rank and holiness, was the first deputed, and not to leave the flock without a shepherd, successors in the prophetic calling were promised; and not only promised, but also sent, to yet farther speak, exhort, teach, and admonish them in the name of the King of kings, the God of Israel. And thus there were the warrior Joshua, valiant and true; the righteous Samuel, who judged the people after the manner of Moses; the king David who never forgot, even when sunk through sin, to return with prayer to his offended Maker; and after him Elijah who never suffered the pangs of earthly dissolution; the inspired Elisha who poured water on Elijah's hands; Isaiah whose greatness of endowment, fervour of piety, and high descent, alike

mark him eminent among the holy of the earth; again the ardent Jeremiah, the man of sorrow, whose eyes beheld, in the desolation of the holy city, what Moses already had foreseen; and Malachi too, the last among these preachers, who again exhorted the people of the second temple to remain steadfast to the law given through Moses; besides numerous others, who all spoke in conformity with the law given through the father of all the prophets. And therefore we read in continuation: "And it shall be, the man who doth not hearken to my words which he may speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who may presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who may speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."— Moses therefore evidently speaks of messenger-prophets who, being men, may be liable to be sinful, and not of a divinity who from his very nature must, in reason, be exempt from sin and falsehood. Besides we may boldly challenge the supporters of the above argument to produce that passage, where it is said that a prophet greater than Moses was to be looked for? On the contrary it does appear from the whole tenor of revelation that Moses was absolutely to be, and for ever, the greatest of his brethren, as it is his law, or rather the law called by his name, and given through his agency, which is to be the standard of the truth or falsehood of any prophet. And even the Messiah himself, were he to appear this instant among us, and were he to declare in so many words, "The son of man is lord even over the Sabbath-day," or "Eat, for what I have declared clean do thou not call unclean," we would be compelled to disobey; for we

should have to look on such an announcement as a temptation purposely put in our way, by which we may be tried, "whether we love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul" (compare with Deut. xiii. 4). No! no prophet can of his own account, not even by a direct message, abrogate any part of the law or add any new precept to the same; for the law having been publicly given, and therefore not resting for confirmation on any miracles wrought, cannot be abolished, except by an equally public act of God, similar to the descent on Sinai, and no evidence short of this ought ever to satisfy us.—Now it will be apparent that, when Moses speaks of a prophet like himself, he means one who is to announce his mission, just as he himself was wont to do, with כה אמר ה' "Thus hath said the Lord;" this can only apply to a man and not to the Deity. Besides we also contend, that the whole passage from the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy under question must refer to one class of persons, as we cannot discover any break or want of connexion in the whole message. If then the first part refers to the Messiah, the latter part must likewise do the same; and can it be believed, that the command should be to slay the Messiah, in case he should speak falsely in the name of God? can it be possible that of one so highly endowed it could be presumed that he should predict what would never happen? The absurdity of an affirmative to these simple questions is too clear to require any farther discussion; and consequently the passage does not speak of one man but of an entire class, such, as said already, were to be, and actually did, make their appearance on earth; and the phrase *like me*, does not

then absolutely imply *equals* with Moses, but only persons deputed in a similar manner to speak a message in God's name, and protected by Him, and instructed by Him. The prophetic office being thus established it was natural enough that wicked men should at times speak falsely in the name of God; and tests were therefore established by which the truth or falsehood of prophecy could be established.—For a long period did these prophets follow each other in regular succession, till the scheme of revelation was completed; for Moses, let it be understood, was the instrument of the law, and consequently in teaching all the duties was by no means to write down all the religious truths and doctrines. The last was accomplished more and more by every succeeding prophet, till the whole was finished by Malachi; after him the prophecy ceased, or rather was suspended, and in him we see the last spark of the holy fire yet illuminating the earth, before its light was hid for a long period, after the announcement of the Lamentations, "Her prophets also found no revelation from the Lord." But we are promised that the time will come, when God will pour out his spirit over all flesh, when our maidens and our youths will again receive the spirit of prophecy, and when again the glory of God will be revealed as of old, (see Joel iii. 1,) and then indeed will be again fulfilled the promise made to Moses: "A prophet the Lord thy God will raise up to thee from among thy brethren, like unto me, him ye shall obey."

O Lord, do Thou accomplish this speedily, and may we in our days see thy glory, and rejoice in thy salvation! Amen.

Tebeth 11th. } 5596.
January 1st. }

DISCOURSE XLVII.

THE MESSIAH.

No. IV.

O OUR GOD, and God of our fathers! in thy just indignation Thou didst in former times hurl us out of our inheritance because of our sins; and Thou hast since then often caused us to pass through fire and through water, and given us rulers severe and cruel, that we might be taught the difference between serving Thee, the merciful and holy One, and of submitting to the yoke of oppressors and enemies, whom our transgressions placed over our heads. And long has the captivity pressed down our spirit, and we have remained dumb like the sheep before her shearers; we have become an object of derision and of contempt to nations that are strangers to thy worship, and we have been plundered by those who not yet have learnt thy service. But by thy holy name Thou hast sworn that not for ever should thy anger last, and that Thou wouldst at one time remember the captives of Israel, and restore them to their land; and that again vineyards should be planted, and fields tilled in the deserted hills and wasted plains. O may it then be thy will soon to fulfil the blissful promise, and may the heart of thy servants be gladdened, by the mercies which Thou wilt display among them, so that all nations may exclaim: "Happy the people to whom the

like has happened, happy the people, whose God is the eternal Lord." Amen.

Brethren!

In reviewing the history of the world we must discover that out of every apparent evil some permanent good is produced, and if even individual suffering should be the consequence, a public benefit will generally ensue, apparent even to our now views, to the imperfect vision of men, who cannot thoroughly understand the reason and connexion of things. This being admitted, and who can doubt it?—it is absolutely necessary to believe, that every thing that occurs must be beneficial, or in other words, that every occurrence will be directed to a beneficial end by the Disposer of all.—If even then we see one nation disappear and another spring up from the ruins of the other's greatness, we should not complain of the apparent evil; for we may rest assured, that the former having fulfilled the circle of its usefulness, the new has taken its place as one better calculated to lead the way in the measure of improvement which the world requires.—It thus happened, that Egypt flourished for a while, nay, Jacob went down there to accomplish his destiny of becoming *the* great nation, and amid the powerful and civilized race that dwelt in the land of the Nile, *he* and his family grew up into a people mighty and distinguished. And when the Egyptians oppressed the strangers whom they had received as friends, God's power was displayed, and amidst avenging judgments Israel was freed from Egyptian thraldom. Still, Egypt was permitted to retain its rule, even as the instrument of punishment

to the Israelites; but at length it fell before the northern warrior Nebuchadnezzar, who had trampled down the kingdoms and states of Central Asia. He swept like a whirlwind over the world, and his path was over ruins of empires and the wreck of cities, and even the holy temple was given into his hands, and he broke the walls of Jerusalem, and led the people captives unto Babylon.—He had fulfilled his mission, when he too was made to feel the awful greatness of the Lord, and was taught wisdom from the mouth of God's servant, and convinced that he had been but an agent in a great work, the work of regeneration, constantly progressing to a fulfilment.—Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom succumbed to Cyrus the Persian, and the Israelites were again permitted to dwell in their former dwelling-places; and again was seen the spectacle of a powerful nation ruling for a while over extensive lands, till its doom was hastened by cruelty and wickedness, and the consequent moral and physical degradation; and the Grecian Alexander, brushed away, as it were, the tottering throne of Darius III., the last ruler in Persia of the successors of the great Cyrus. —A new period seemed now to open, a new era appeared to greet the world; refinement chased away barbarism; the elegant arts and sciences supplanted rudeness and ignorance; and towns arose where magnificence and luxury hitherto almost unknown became universal. But all this outward elegance, this tinsel beauty was weakness itself; it lacked a soul; there was not the life of holy truth in all the fabric, and it tumbled and was frittered away by the iron arm of Roman conquest; and the crazy building of a vain-glorious philosophy, the gaudy show of enervat-

ing sensuality, sunk ingloriously before the merciless children of conquest that swarmed in numberless legions from the shores of the beautiful Italy. Thus was transferred the seat of empire from the Nile to the shores of the insignificant Tiber, and Rome was hailed the mistress of the world.—And Judæa too fell beneath the resistless power, and the Jewish leaders were carried in triumph through the hostile city, and those sons of Jacob that had escaped the slaughter were driven into slavery and banishment.—Rome's triumph, however, was not unending, and the town that had vainly styled itself *eternal* was sacked by unheard of barbarians breaking forth from the very centre of Asia, the cradle of mankind.—Again, these barbarians felt the force of elegance and learning, they occupied the fields which they had laid waste, and reared kingdoms, and aimed for universal empire.—Well-nigh had the scheme succeeded, and all Europe listened to the command of a chief unknown in ancient times, and the head of a religious sect dictated laws and disposed of empires from his seat at Rome, and dared to call himself God's vicegerent on earth. Every thing seemed at one time to yield to this almost magic spell, and kings and nations poured out their blood at the bidding of this fancied power for the recovery of a fancied treasure; and the right of thinking and of worshipping God after the dictates of his own law was called a crime, because it gainsaid the doctrines of the Roman pontiff. And straightway the torch of persecution was kindled, and in every town blazed the stake, and in every place was erected the gallows, and in every district was set up the scaffold, to immolate the victims on

the altars of a false belief. Where now was any refuge for Israel?—Hardly had persecution ceased at one spot, because of the want of objects for slaughter, when the rage for blood showed itself at another, and the star of Jacob seemed nigh its setting for ever. But again the power, which appeared so strong, was broken, and before the words of an humble man nations, once ready to strike in its cause, buckled on their armour against its head and his supporters, and by degrees the fire of persecution was smothered, and in some measure was enlargement vouchsafed to Israel to recover fresh strength to meet the fulfilment of their destiny:—this was the will of Heaven.—Who can say, after candidly viewing the history of the world, as we have just done, that every step has not been an improvement? and do we not clearly perceive, in all the mutation of empires, the evident finger of God displayed in the preservation of our nation amidst all the vicissitudes of fortune? There flourished the Egptians—but where are they? the Assyrians—but they are no more;—the Babylonians—their very memory is forgotten;—the Persians—but their empire has scarcely left a wreck behind;—the Grecians —but their very religion is now a theme of ridicule, and what remains of their state is not a resemblance of its former greatness;—and lastly,—the Romans, how powerful were they not once; the words,—"The Senate and the Roman People" struck terror in the most distant lands; but long since has this greatness ceased, and this terror has not for ages past oppressed the world.—Again, the religion of Rome, after the downfall of its empire, which as said, was nigh becoming universal, has lost its power of harming; for

the nations, which it once kept in subjection, have each almost adopted a reformed system, as they term it, of their own, and men now legislate on the most sacred topics as though the eternal concerns of the soul could be regulated like a matter of state policy by the voice of a despot, who speaks in the name of his people, or by an assembled body of politicians, or even at length by some learned philosopher or divine, who builds up systems or pulls them down, as it happens to suit his fancy.—Yet under all circumstances, whether as rulers or as slaves, whether prosperous or oppressed, we the Israelites have maintained intact God's greatest and best gift; we have preserved the law, we have adhered to the revelation from Sinai; we have, in a word, continued true to the character of a people of God, a beloved treasure! This is no vain boasting, this is no idle grandiloquence: no—brethren, it is the sober truth, an undeniable truth, which our worst opponents dare not, cannot, gainsay! —But not for our own glorification did the Almighty preserve us, not to show us up as something curious was all this effected; but for a far nobler end, that we might become the means gradually to amend the rest of mankind, and at length to be the agents in spreading salvation, both temporal and permanent, to the ends of the earth.

Do you now see what is meant by the reign of the king Messiah? is it now clear to you what is to be his mission?—what his doings?—what his character?—Evidently the reign of the Messiah must be one of happiness and peace; his mission must, in the first instance, be to the Israelites, and then to the rest of mankind; his doings in this mission must be distin-

guished by truth, justice, and rectitude; and his character must be like that of prophets of old—like Moses, like Samuel, like Elijah, one of piety, and hope and entire singleness with the Lord his God.—In all this he needs not any attributes of divinity, no delegation of any more of the divine power than was awarded before this to extraordinary men, who acted in the name of God and by his will in a sphere of greatness and glory which had been marked out for them as their proper mission. It will moreover be obvious to you, that the advent of such a gifted one, endowed above all men with wisdom, with understanding, and with power, and wholly guided in all his acts by a pious will, and protected by divine favour, is an object over which God may be supposed to watch (to speak in the language of man) with particular solicitude; and that besides, the period of this mission will not be hastened, before every thing on the whole earth is in such a state of preparation, that the greatest effect can be produced in the shortest time; and that, as we are totally ignorant of the counsels of God, any farther than He has been pleased to communicate them to us through his prophets, it would be idle presumption in us to fix this period with exactness, or to declare the world at one time more ripe for the expected coming than the other. Let me here at once remark that, therefore, it will avail nothing in an argument to assert, that the coming of the Messiah must have been fixed by prophets for a definite period, because Jews at one particular time looked for him with anxiety; for even granting that they were really expecting the Messiah at the time so often dwelt upon by our opponents:

still that argues nothing more than that the hope of deliverance from thraldom was strong in the minds of our people, and that they looked forward with hope for the arrival of the son of David, to do for them at that time what the prophets had announced he should do, at what they called "the end of days," meaning a period remote and distant from the time of their prophecy.—Even grant that many persons started up, claiming the dignity of Messiah in their own persons, and deceiving many by pretended miracles; nay, grant that this feeling of hope was so strong that even the learned and the good were deceived: it amounts to no more than that, at a period of almost unheard-of distress, our nation, true to their faith, looked towards Heaven as the source of their deliverance, but that, for the sake of their great criminality, their prayer was not granted, although many were misled by an appearance of a counterfeit fulfilment of their wishes. To draw from such a deplorable state of confusion and dismay an argument in favour of the claims of any individual, chiefly because he lived at that very period of time, is basing the claim upon a very weak foundation; and bad indeed must be that cause which would rest for support upon grounds so entirely devoid of cogency and force.

According to the views just exhibited, which are but a natural deduction of sound reasoning, without a resort to revelation, we have established, *first*, that a change in the order of things, as relates to the moral state of man, may safely be looked for. *Secondly*, that as God always acts through the agency of men, the expected change will be wrought through a man whom, for the sake of distinction, we will call the

Messiah, or the anointed, chosen, or chief, as the instrument in the hand of God. *Thirdly*, that this chosen agent will, and must, be eminent in all the virtues which adorn human nature, and that his mental endowments will correspond with his high office. *Fourthly*, that the Israelites, the visible evidences of God's power, will be benefitted in a high degree by the arrival of the deliverer. And lastly, that all nations will, under his reign, be led to a knowledge of the true and only God. Having thus stated our views, it is now necessary, according to our usual custom, to fortify every position by scriptural arguments, in order to show that in this, as well as in every other consolatory doctrine, Scripture tallies with reason.

Our first position is: "That a change will come over the moral state of man." Every philanthropist, of every age, I am well-nigh tempted to assert, has revolved in his mind the means of preventing a resort to arms to settle national and individual disputes. But as often as one thought he had discovered the desired remedy, some untoward mishap proved that the means were inadequate to the end, and that the beautiful vision had vanished into thin airy nothing. "Bloodshed is sinful," teaches the philanthropist; "War to the knife," is the patriot's watchword, who sees his country invaded and her sanctuaries violated. "Aggression is indefensible," is the motto of the peace-lover; but anon you are aroused by the war-whoop of the savage, and the cries of your bleeding infants—the sight of your murdered wife, rouse in you all the feelings of revenge which can prompt the bereaved father, the lone husband, to deeds of daring and a

patient endurance of all the hardships and fatigues of war.—Who then can cry out "peace," when there is no peace? where is that concert of action by which modern diplomacy has assayed to quench the torch of war? and is it not reasonable to presume that all new schemes will fail, as all others hitherto have utterly failed? But yet, that scheme which in human hands is but a Utopian attempt, which can never hope for success, in higher keeping will, must, yield the blessed fruit; and not for ever shall the brother bewail the slaughtered brother, nor the father mourn for the early, gory, grave of his beloved offspring. And, says the prophet, in speaking of human attempts (Malachi, chap. i. 4): "For if Edom even say,—We are impoverished, but we will return and build the wasted places; but thus saith the Lord of hosts, They may indeed build, and I will surely throw down; and people will call them, The territory of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever more;"—for not to human hands, not to a mortal's foresight, will the Lord yield the superintendence of his creation, an interference in his high prerogative of Ruler of the universe. But in the Lord's own good time will be accomplished what Isaiah foretells:

והיה באחרית הימים נכון יהיה הר בית ה׳ בראש
ההרים ונשא מגבעות ונהרו אליו כל הגוים :
ישעיה ב׳ ב׳ :

"And it shall come to pass at the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be firmly established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and unto it shall flow all the nations." ii. 2.

And then continues Isaiah: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us of his ways, and we may walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. And he will judge among the nations, and decide for many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-knives: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn any more war."—But little need be added in explanation of a text so plain and self-evident. The prophet speaks of a change that is to take place, and describes it as twofold: one is, the evident exaltation of the religion of the Lord as the universal law of the world, and the other, the perfect state of peace that is to prevail in consequence of the adoption of the holy law.—Now this is precisely that condition of society which has been so long and so ardently desired, and this we call in one word the *days of the Messiah.* Now, can any one maintain that this condition has been brought about? is there now one law, one faith, and one God universally acknowledged? is every sword beaten into a ploughshare? is every spear turned into a pruning-knife? or rather does not the land resound with preparation for strife? do not nations plot each other's downfall? does not daily the deep-mouthed cannon thunder forth death and destruction to its doomed hundreds? do not yet hostile fleets from the far North and from the distant West sail forth in all the gay array of martial prowess and settle the deep hatred of their rival nations in the far golden regions of the sunny East?

And this you call peace? such discord you call harmony?—Or perhaps you imagine that the prophet spoke of mental peace, of agreement in religious tenets, of a universal acquiescence in one rule of life. —But even this has not been attained. For how many are the creeds now which mankind acknowledge! There is the ignorant negro, who literally says to the stone, "Thou art my father;" and the barbarous South Sea islander, who sacrifices his captives to his dreadful image; and there the indweller of the land of China, with his absurd mockeries in place of worship; again, here stand the adherents of the lama, believing in a perpetual reign of their manidol on earth; and there you will behold the melancholy Hindoo, rolling in the sand to be crushed by the wagon of his false homage, or wallowing in the swamp of the Ganges, to be devoured by the crocodile or the shark; and there stands the fierce Arab, defying all law, an enemy to all men, and trusting only to his good lance, and he says, "There is but one God, but Mahomed is his prophet," and his religion is one of forms mostly, and his beatitude but sensuality;—again behold the Romanist, seeking in the elected head of his church the vicegerent of his god; and the numerous sects of another belief next present themselves, all maintaining that each alone is right: and thus you have a picture of discord in place of the harmony prophesied. And yet you say that the reign of the Messiah has endured already near two thousand years? when shall we look for harmony? is the dispute of sectarians waxing less angry as time advances? are not daily new and often monstrous absurdities propagated in the name of the

king of peace? and where is this all to end? You perhaps say, at the second coming of the Messiah! So then you acknowledge that the first alleged coming failed of accomplishing all that was necessary; but we too hope for a coming of Messiah; but it is the first, the only coming, when all will be fulfilled and accomplished to the letter, which has been foretold concerning his ministry. For, in looking through the Scriptures to be informed on this important subject, we are constantly referred to the prince in whose days all shall dwell in safety; but in no one instance is an allusion even made, in so many words, to a second appearance after his removal from the eyes of the world.—On the contrary, a permanent reign is foretold: "And my servant David shall be prince over them for ever," says Ezekiel xxxvii. 25, which verse surely, if it has any meaning, which nobody can deny, must indicate an everlasting state of blessedness, from the coming of the Messiah till all shall be resolved again into chaos, if this be the ultimate will of God, and a reproduction of a better earth and a better heaven. And who knows to a certainty, what is precisely meant by the new creation which is foretold in Isaiah lxvi. 22? The words are: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall stand permanently before me, saith the Lord, thus shall exist your posterity and your name." Now, this may mean, that when this earth and all the present system of nature shall have existed during a certain period, then a different system, one more perfect than the one now in being, shall be established, which after its formation shall stand permanently before its Creator; such an idea, let me remark, is by no means

discordant with the principles of men of science, who have endeavoured to seek wisdom from the records of nature itself.—Yet, in the midst of this change, the upholding of Jacob's progeny is not to be lost sight of, and consequently the Messiah's reign is not even then to terminate.—Another meaning of this verse may be, that it is the intention of God to remodel the moral state of the earth, and to infuse in all created things a spirit of love and unity, and thus a new creation will be effected in the moral and spiritual world, though the physical and material substances may have undergone no perceptible change. In every view of this difficult question, however, it will be perceived, that the reign of the Messiah and the existence of the Israelitish people shall be unending while the world lasts.

All the above clearly proves, that according to the revelation of the prophets a great moral, and perhaps too a physical, change is impending, when the discord and strife which now distract the world shall no longer be experienced. Whatever events, please to observe, have taken place in bygone days, whatever events are now occurring, and whatever events will come to pass in future times, all will tend ultimately to the consummation of this great change. If now one nation rises in blood, and shoots up its branches from the ashes of a slaughtered people; if we see apparent injustice even in the unjust being permitted to tread upon the head of fallen greatness: we may rest in the hopeful assurance, that all is so wisely ordained, all so nicely balanced, that, when the end of all this warfare and this unhappiness shall have arrived, we shall discover that every thing has truly

happened for the best, and all has been so ordained by the counsel of Him who supervises all our conduct, that nothing but justice, nothing but righteousness, will be the ultimate result, and that the course of events was so organized as to bring about, in the best manner, the end which, in the mind of God, is already come to pass, which with Him is the past already, but which to us is yet the future, and the accomplishment of which we have still to expect.—What matters it then, that first the Egyptians flourished, and next the Assyrians and Babylonians, then the Grecians, after them the Romans, whether it be roaming savages that scour the forest, or bigoted Spaniards that devoted millions of victims to destruction? All, all are in his eyes but vanity, merely like the dust that adheres to the polished scales—all their doings are nothing in his estimation, and He looks upon their efforts at greatness, upon their puny striving at renown, with derision and with scorn, as the Psalmist says (ii. 1–4): "Wherefore do nations rage, and people attempt vanity?—He that dwelleth in heaven will laugh, the Lord will hold them in derision;" not as though the holy One indulged in spiteful malice, but to make the human ear understand the utter weakness of human ambition.—In short, all is subservient to the great end that is approaching, slowly perhaps to us, whose years are appointed to the short space of seventy annual revolutions, or perhaps to the frosty age of eighty, but quickly, speedily, to Him, whose age no numbers can indicate, whose existence is not limited by time or space. —As yet, however, the state of warfare is not over; as yet oppression stalks abroad; as yet Israel is com-

pelled to bend his head under the heavy yoke which oppressors fasten on his neck; as yet wickedness assumes the right of giving the law to innocence; and consequently the altered state of the world has not arrived, the Messiah has not yet been sent. But the time of this great event may be very near, nearer than any one imagines,—the wrathful time of trial may be approaching; but where is the preparation which is needed to pass the fiery ordeal? And what says the prophet (Malachi iii. 1–4)? "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall clear out the way before me, and suddenly will come to his temple the Lord whom ye seek; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire for, behold! he is coming, saith the Lord of hosts. But who can sustain the day of his coming? and who can stand when he appeareth? for he is like the fire of the melter, and like the lye of the washers; and he will sit as a melter and purifier of silver; and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and then shall be pleasant unto the Lord the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem, as in the days of old, and as in former years."—The refiner will come and sift the sinners from among the community of the righteous;—and what will stand the test of the Messiah's fire? will it be a heap of wealth?—a renown for greatness in eloquence or prowess in arms?—will it be the love which one bears for pleasures and sensuality?—No, it will be the love which we bear to God, the readiness which we show to obey his laws, and the mass of virtues, which alone is our true inheritance in this world, here whilst living, and in yonder life, when our soul has

departed to the place of its first origin.—O, let it then be our aim to observe the precepts of the Lord, and let us ever be willing and prepared to yield ourselves obedient servants to his will, as our ancestors were on that day, when assembled by the faithful Moses they stood at the foot of Sinai, and heard announced from amidst the fire the Ten Commandments which God instituted as the terms of the covenant between Him and Israel. Now, these are the riches which we possess; these are the blessings which God wishes to spread over all the earth; these are the gifts which the Messiah is to distribute to all the peoples; and when he, therefore, is sent to rejoice the hearts of all men, nations indeed will exclaim: "Let us go to the house of the God of Jacob, and let Him teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths," and then truly will it be fulfilled what the prophet says, "That from Zion shall go out the law, and the word of God out of Jerusalem."

O our Father and King! how long shall we hope? how long shall we pray? and when wilt Thou hear us? For ages we have hoped for peace, but our prayers were not heard; we looked for quiet, but the oppressor was suffered to lord over us! O, let it now be thy will to hasten the days of our deliverance, and cause it to be verified in our days, that the angel of the covenant and the son of David thy servant may come to gladden our hearts with thy salvation; and then our joy will be complete, when Thou barest thy holy arm before all nations, and provest to the whole world that Thou, O Lord! art God alone, and that beside Thee there is none in heaven, and none like unto Thee among the powers of the earth; but that

to Thee, truly, belong the kingdom and the adoration of all mankind! Amen.

Shebat 17th. } 5596.
February 5th. }

DISCOURSE XLVIII.

THE MESSIAH.

No. V.

O Thou! Shepherd of Israel, hear our supplications, and let thy countenance shine unto us; renew in us a pure heart, and infuse in us thy holy spirit, that we may know how to serve Thee, and to fear Thee all the days that we live on the earth. Amen.

Brethren!

In the view we have taken thus far of the subject of the Messiah, we have arrived at the conclusion, that both reason and Scripture warrant us in looking forward to a change that is impending over the moral condition of man. This change, we have shown, must produce a state of universal peace all over the earth, so that no one, be he weak or strong, need to fear or to ward off the attacks of his neighbour. We have also proved, that this state is not the present condition of the world, and consequently, that the predictions of the prophets have in this respect not yet seen their fulfilment; and whereas the announce-

ment of the prophets must be true as the emanation of the holy Spirit, it is reasonable, and consonant with religion, to look forward with an unwavering confidence to the fulfilment of the prophecies relating to the reign of universal peace.—The second deduction laid down was, that this change was to be effected through an agent, whom we call the Messiah. On this subject so much has already been said incidentally, that we might pass over to the next point, which you perhaps recollect was the character of this messenger; but it being perhaps best to draw some more light from Scripture, we will illustrate it somewhat more at large.—Already in the book of Genesis we find, that Jacob prophesied of a Shiloh, to whom the nations should assemble. This evidently refers to a messenger, whom God intends to send to fulfil the object of the world's regeneration. The prophecy, it may freely be admitted, is not very explicit as to the manner in which this is to be effected; but later prophets afford us ample and more enlarged details, and as the whole Bible is but one entire, as has been demonstrated on other occasions, one part must always be taken to illustrate the other. And we are, therefore, warranted in the belief, that Jacob spoke of the same teacher, whom the seers of later ages foresaw in their visions. One remarkable phrase you must particularly note in all prophecies concerning Messiah; it is that the words, באחרית הימים "In the end of days"* are employed in nearly all, from Jacob,

* However we may render the words, whether in the end, succession of, or last days, they must be viewed as indicating a great stretch of time far into the future: their very indefiniteness shows that they refer to the close of the present state of trial.

the earliest one who spoke of the Messiah, to the latter days of the first, nay, even down to the commencement of the second temple. This would seem to prove, that not one of the prophets contemplated the desired advent as absolutely close at hand, and that the rebuilding of the house of God by Ezra and his associates was not viewed as an accomplishment of the promised happiness of the people of Israel. This, it will be easily seen, is an important point in our argument, which scarcely can be overthrown by any thing that has been advanced against our hopes, so far as my knowledge thereof extends. So then, it would appear, that Jacob the first prophet, who predicted the Messiah in distinct terms, referred, no less than his successors, his advent to a period remote, more or less, according to the fitness of the world for the altered state that is to follow in his footsteps.—Bileam, in his advice to Balak to mislead Israel to sin, also spoke (Numb. xxiv. 14): "And now I am ready to go to my people; come, I will counsel thee, what this people will do to thy people at the end of days." And in ver. 17, he says, foreseeing the exalted glory of Israel: "I see him, but he is not yet now, I behold him, but he is not near; there steppeth forth a star from Jacob, and there ariseth a sceptre out of Israel, and he pierceth the corners of Moab, and destroyeth all the children of Seth." Ver. 19: "A ruler shall come from Jacob, and destroy whatever escapeth out of the city." In this passage, so corroborative of the Patriarch's words, an agent, nay, a human agent is distinctly announced, and we are told, that his advent was foreseen by the gentile prophet, although it had not then been witnessed, nor was it to be near at

hand; and that to the messenger was to belong the earthly rule over the nations. This remarkable prediction is farther supported by Isaiah, chap. lx. 12: "For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve shall perish, and the nations shall be utterly laid waste;" and by Jeremiah xlvi. 27–28: "But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel! for behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be at rest, and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Thou—do thou not fear, my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but of thee I will not make a full end; I will correct thee in judgment, but never destroy thee altogether."—Although these two passages do not speak distinctly of the Messiah, I am induced to cite them at this stage of the argument to exhibit at one view the connexion between the various predictions delivered at so great distances of time, and under varying circumstances. Having now touched this point, it may be as well to state at once that the annihilation of the gentiles does not allude to the extermination of the individuals composing the mass of mankind; but only to their national existence, which will be effected, the more fully to reduce the whole remainder of the human race to peace and harmony. The individuals, however, are not to be cut off, but are to become servants of the Lord, as will be shown hereafter.—It will be seen from the foregoing, that the idea of a redeeming human agent, acting under the evident supervision of God, was distinctly known to the Israelites, as early as the days of Moses, and even before; this

also is a very important point in our argument, and must do away with the assumption which has been hazarded, that the early Israelites knew nothing of a Messiah.—If we now trace the prophecies downwards, including several other allusions of Moses, we shall find the great hope for a human saviour under God constantly kept in view; but it would require much time to cite the whole and to illustrate them. We must therefore proceed at once to the distinct annunciation of the redeemer and his character, which we find in the books of the later prophets, from which indeed most of our doctrines must be confirmed, as they are more ample in detail than the scattered predictions of former periods.—Let us begin with Isaiah; in his eleventh chapter he says: "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stem of Jessé, and a sprout shall spring out of his roots. And there shall rest upon him the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And he shall be animated by the fear of the Lord; and not after the sight of his eyes shall he judge, and not after the hearing of his ears shall he decide; but he shall judge with righteousness the poor, and decide with equity for the suffering ones of the earth, and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness, the girdle of his hips." And in continuation: "And it shall happen on that day, that he of the root of Jessé, who shall stand as an ensign of the people, to him shall nations come to inquire, and his resting-place shall be

glorious." Jeremiah, chap. xxx. 9, says: "And they will serve the Lord their God, and David their king whom I will raise up unto them."—Chap. xxxiii.: "Behold, days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will fulfil that good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and over the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will let grow up unto David the sprout of righteousness, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be helped and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety, and this is what it shall be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'" Ezekiel says (chap. xxxvii.): "And speak to them, Thus saith the Lord Eternal, Behold I will take the children of Israel from between the nations whither they have wandered, and I will gather them from every side, and bring them unto their own land. And I will make them into one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be for king to them all, and they shall not be any more two nations, and not be divided at any time into two kingdoms any more. And they shall not any more defile themselves with their idols, and their abominations, and with all their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and I will cleanse them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them, and one shepherd shall be for them all,—and in my ordinances they shall walk, and my statutes they shall keep and do them. And they shall dwell in the land which I have given to my servant, to Jacob, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they and their children and their

children's children for ever, and David my servant shall be prince to them for ever."—And in reference to the same subject we read chapter xxxiv.: "And I will save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey, and I will judge between lamb and lamb. I also will appoint over them one shepherd who shall feed them, namely, my servant David—he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord—I will be to them as God, and my servant David shall be prince among them: I the Lord have spoken it."—Hosea, too, clearly speaks of the Messiah, and like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, calls him David; for we read in chap. iii. 5: "After that the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king."—Amos also alludes to the same personages (chap. ix. 11): "On that day I will raise the fallen tabernacle of David, and I will repair its breaches, and its ruins I will raise up, and build it up as in former days."—Micah, after stating the punishment that was to overtake the Israelites for their wickedness, speaks of the glory that should ultimately await them, when all had been accomplished, and thus addresses the city from which the family of David has sprung (v. 1–3): "But thou Bethlehem Ephratha, the least though thou be among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from olden times, from the most ancient days.—And he shall stand forward, and feed Israel through the strength of the Lord, through the excellency of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide safely; for now shall he be great even unto the ends of the earth."—Zechariah also speaks of the Messiah in the follow-

ing words: "Rejoice greatly, thou daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem, for thy king will come to thee, righteous and victorious he is, lowly, and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of a she-ass. And I will destroy the chariots from Ephraim and the horses from Jerusalem, and destroyed shall be the bow of war; and he shall speak peace to the nations, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." (ix.)—In the foregoing, I have endeavoured to lay before you a concurrent mass of scriptural texts to show to you at one view, what the Bible teaches concerning the person and character of the expected redeemer. You will discover that, among the texts selected, I have adopted several on which the Nazarenes rely particularly as foundations for their own faith; but upon a close inspection it will readily be perceived, that their construction cannot hold good, as the described character and doings of their reputed messiah does not accord with the whole of the requirements of prophecy.

You will now see, that, in all the passages quoted, the Messiah is either called David, from David's stem, from Jessé's root, the king, the prince, but never a god or a son of God; in fact, the idea of a divine redeemer, other than the Creator himself, is nowhere indicated, as far as we can learn. The chief personal characteristic of the Messiah then is, his lineal descent from David, who was the son of Jessé of Bethlehem. And, as with us no mother whatever could confer the name of her family upon the offspring, any more than among other civilized nations, as no priest could be one, merely by his mother's being a priest's daugh-

ter (and so in other cases): it farther follows, that the descent from David means a descent in the male line, which, as has been shown on a former occasion, was never to cease according to the promise of prophecy. In what manner the Nazarene claimant of the messiahship answers in this respect to the prophecies, remains yet to be shown by his advocates.

I must here draw your attention to an objection that might, perhaps, be made by unbelievers, that the whole of the scheme of Messiah may have been an invention of court-sycophants to please the reigning family of Judah, then ruling in Jerusalem. To this we answer, that even if Isaiah could have had such a motive, as he lived under the flourishing rule of Hezekiah: still this could not have operated on the others, especially, as at least two, to wit, Hosea and Amos, lived in the rival kingdom of Samaria, and one, Ezekiel, was in captivity among the Babylonians. Besides this, Jeremiah spoke bitterly against the kings who misgoverned God's people; and at the very time when he with anguished feelings witnessed the assault of the Chaldeans upon the battered walls of Jerusalem, when famine, pestilence and the sword were slaying their thousands, when Zedekiah was taken during his flight, when his children were slaughtered in his presence, his eyes bored out, and he was led bound with fetters to Babylon, it was that the most cheering promises with regard to the consolation of Israel were promulgated. Where then could be his motive, save that of holy truth, to speak of greatness to come to the house of David? Besides, what motive could Jacob have to predict glory to Judah, who, no matter how devoted soever he had been latterly

to his father, had certainly been the adviser of selling the beloved Joseph into banishment and slavery?—I know not indeed that such an objection has ever been started; but infidelity is so fruitful of inventions, that I thought it might be advisable to refute a supposed question, even before it was stated; since it is quite as good as most that are so gravely urged against our holy religion and our hopes of better things. So far, however, from its impairing the credibility of the expectation of a Messiah from David's line, the remarkable unanimity of men speaking at such distant periods—one patriarch, one heathen, some Jews, others priests, and others again Israelites, some during the first temple, others during captivity, others at last after the rebuilding of God's house; of whom some were men of high authority, as Isaiah and Daniel, others again men of humble life, as Amos, and Jonah, and Jeremiah,—must convince any one, except a bitter skeptic, that the spirit of God alone could have produced the result; especially as several of the prophets were contemporary, for instance, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Hosea and Isaiah, and it is not probable, speaking humanly, that one could have known what the other one was promulgating, at a great distance, and living in a different kingdom. To assert that the prophecies were made at one time, by one or more men, is too absurd a position to deserve a serious refutation. For, as has been shown in another place,* the style of the various books of the Bible is so different, and the internal evidence is so strong, that each actor in the scenes described was

* Jews and Mosaic Law, chap. xxiii. (first edition) pp. 170-171.

the narrator himself, or had a contemporary historian, that it cannot be possible that the Bible should have been composed at one period of time. And if then it is admitted, as it must be, that the several books were written at different times, and at different places, by persons unacquainted with each other personally, and perhaps with each other's writings: the position we have taken becomes incontrovertible, namely, that the unanimity of the prophets is the strongest proof that what they announced was the truth, infused into their minds by the inspiration of the holy Spirit.

This son of David is to be an agent of God, for we are distinctly told: "And I will raise unto them one shepherd who shall feed them, my servant David,—and I will be their God." In this prophecy, which cannot be mistaken, the prophetic, or rather the delegate character of the redeemer, is announced; and consequently to assert that the Messiah is to be in any way, even by implication, independent of his Sender, is to speak contrary to revelation; or in other words, Messiah is to be a man, a man only, and no god. If now the true Messiah does appear, as appear he will in the end of days, he will at once announce himself as the *messenger* of God, and in his holy name he will speak. Even grant (what we some time ago denied as exclusively applicable to him) that the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy alludes to Messiah, then he will address the people as Moses always did before, and as did the other prophets, with: "Thus speaks the Lord." But on no account is he to have any power to alter of his own accord any commandment, either positive or negative; but, being one of the people, a man like them, a subject to divine au-

thority as well as they, he is to be bound by the same laws which they have to obey, and he is to execute the divine will, not to set himself above it. If we now are asked: "Whether we believe the law to be perpetual?" we may answer, unhesitatingly, Yes; since the advent of the Messiah in no place seems in the prophets' minds to be connected with the abrogation of any commandment. On the contrary, Ezekiel, chap. xlv., in speaking of the days that are to come, distinctly refers to the sacrifices, to Sabbaths, new-moon-days, and festivals, and farthermore to the jubilee, or the year of freedom; consequently the law which we now possess, and which contains the enactments of these precepts, shall after these days also be observed. It is true that some slight additions are prescribed with regard to the prince; but they are only for him, and not for the people at large, therefore so to say, mere local or individual regulations, not general laws. If now a claimant to the dignity of Messiah arrogates divine attributes, or claims the power of destroying the law and the prophets: he cannot, of necessity, be the one whom we expect, and whom Moses and the prophets foretold.

The man Messiah, we stated, in the enumerations of the doctrinal points advanced, "must be eminent in all the virtues which adorn man; and his mental endowments will correspond with his high office."—This character is especially ascribed to him in the extract from the eleventh chapter of Isaiah we have quoted. "On him shall rest the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord."—We here see, first, that the

Messiah is not to be an ordinary man, not one merely wise as others are, but particularly fitted for the high requirements of his glorious mission. He shall possess capacity for information—or wisdom; capacity for judgment—or understanding; capacity for governing and advising—or counsel; capacity for energy in maintaining the right, supporting the innocent, and repressing the wicked—or might; he shall have extensive knowledge, or whatever any man knows or can acquire, that shall be familiar to him; and, at last, all these gifts are to be crowned by the utmost reliance on heavenly aid, and he will ever have the fear of God before him. For this exemplary conduct he will have the spirit of prophecy—or knowledge of hidden things; and in his exercise of justice he will therefore not have to depend on the pleadings of the parties interested, nor will he have to rely upon the outward appearance which a case may present to the human eye; but, more than any other man, he will be able to dive into what to them is unknown, expose the evil to the eye of day, and bring out the right, though struggling against powerful craft and consummate wickedness. Evil-doers in him will find an unflinching judge, and he, in imitation of the God that sends him, will fear neither the great, nor be terrified by the mighty; "and he will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked," whilst, on the other hand, "he will judge with righteousness the poor, and decide with equity for the suffering ones of the earth." It must be kept in mind that a great cause of wickedness and oppression is, that the tribunals, before which the criminals are to be arraigned, are apt to be de-

ceived; and therefore we are promised that the Messiah should in his judgment be guided by more insight than other judges, so that no crime, however secretly committed, shall escape his cognizance. This, then, gives us a third characteristic—the Messiah must be eminently wise, and a dispenser of justice. Such a one has not as yet been seen on earth, and consequently we yet expect his coming. In addition to what Isaiah thus emphatically announces, we have also the prophecy of Jeremiah; in his third chapter he says: "And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." In chapter xxiii. we have a farther explanation as to who these shepherds are to be: "And I will raise over them shepherds who shall feed them, and they (the flock or the people) shall fear no more nor be dismayed, and none of them shall be missing. Behold days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will raise up unto David a righteous sprout, and he shall reign as king, and prosper, and he shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. In his days shall Judah be helped, and Israel shall dwell in safety; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." To understand these passages correctly, it is only necessary to refer back to the occupation which David, the first king of Judah, followed even after he had been anointed king—he was a shepherd; besides which, Moses already compared Israel to a flock, for whom he begged of God the appointment of a trusty shepherd. Add to this that our people were an agricultural nation, living from the produce of their farms and pastures, and but little given to trading and

luxuries, before the pure spirit of the divine legislation had lost its influence among them. All the prophetic imagery is therefore drawn from the pursuits of husbandry, with but few exceptions. Jeremiah, now, had uttered his complaints against the wicked rulers, by whose mismanagement the people went to ruin; he styled them, "Shepherds that destroy and scatter the flock of God's pasture," and announced at the same time that these bad shepherds should be punished. But he says, "That though the flock had been scattered, the remainder should be gathered to their former fold, where they should increase and multiply;" and he then continues with the passage quoted, "And I will raise over them shepherds who shall feed them," meaning that at the restoration of the people under the king Messiah, who is to be the righteous sprout from David, leaders should arise who will be different, far different, from the officers of the Jewish kings, who oppressed the poor and misled the wealthy. From this we again learn the character of the redeemer: he is to be a leader after God's own mind, just and equitable, free from the taint of injustice, and perfectly submissive to the behests of the Lord. Under him security is to reign; no one there shall be to make the remnant of Israel afraid, for they shall dwell free from aggression and assault. The name of the prince, too, as well as of the glorious city, shall be, "The Lord is our Righteousness," but as yet the city of Jerusalem is not inhabited in safety; its name is not "The Lord our Righteousness," ה' צדקנו, nor has that man arisen who is the leader of all Israel, and who is honoured with the same name!

As shown already, prophets say much relative to

the high characteristics of the coming king, but the limits which must be given to a public address will not permit me to adduce them all. We must therefore be satisfied for the present with adverting only to the passage from Zechariah, already quoted, to show that the expectations we entertain of a Messiah are consonant with Scripture. "Be greatly rejoiced, O daughter of Zion,—behold thy king will come unto thee, righteous and victorious is he, lowly and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of a she-ass."—We have been taunted by our opponents with expecting a mere temporary king, a warrior and a conqueror.—To this we reply, that we expect in the Messiah a twofold character,—the one is purely spiritual, as has been shown already, and as I intend proving hereafter in a subsequent address, but the other characteristic is certainly temporary, and no one, we are free to say, can be *the* Messiah, who does not unite both in his own person.—From Ezekiel especially, and also Obediah and Zechariah, it appears that great wars will be waged in Palestine at the time of the end; and farther that this will be a period of great tribulation to Israel. We are also told, that our people will, by the aid of God, escape from the threatened extirpation; and now this aid of God will be rendered through an agent, who is the Messiah; he is therefore called righteous and victorious, literally however a "helped one," meaning guided and assisted of God. If this temporal character of warrior in the holy cause of defending his people and of subjecting barbarians, who come to kill and destroy, derogates from his high dignity in the estimation of our opponents: they are perfectly welcome to all the

addition to their argument which they can derive from it; *we* see nothing in it save a farther proof of the goodness of God, in protecting his people from destruction against a, perhaps, united world. But let it not be lost sight of, that immediately after speaking of the victoriousness of Messiah, the prophet calls him "lowly and riding on an ass;" and why so humbly mounted? why not on a prancing war-steed? why not bedecked with the spoils of the vanquished? Because says Zechariah: "I will cut off chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem;" the king himself, therefore, will not appear on a beast of war, but on an humble animal of labour, for meekness will be the character of him, as well as it was of Moses, and he will in his own person teach humility and love of God; and then (after the wars of these times are over), "destroyed shall be the battle-bow, for he shall speak peace unto the nations, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." So that the temporal actions of our future hope shall redound as much to the benefit of mankind as his spiritual gifts will be; for those will pave the way for peace and happiness,—these will establish the same on a foundation which shall never be moved. I regret exceedingly, that I cannot dwell longer on the subject, and examine more at length the objections so often made; but I trust, that what has been said will prove, that our opinions are altogether founded on the word of God, and are conformable to the dictates of reason. God, understand well, works through natural means and natural agents, and consequently these will always be resorted to in some measure, even at the performing of great miracles.

Connected, however, with the advent of the son of David is the mission of another glorious name, that of Elijah the prophet; for we read, Malachi iii. 23–24:

הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בא יום ה׳ הגדול והנורא: והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם: מלאכי ג׳ כג׳–כד׳:

"Behold I send unto you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the day of the Lord, the great and dreadful; and he shall turn back the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."

It will thus appear that love and truth are to pave the way for the great day of the Lord, and Elijah is to be sent to be the precursor of the redeemer. No Elijah has yet come to gladden the hearts of the parents and the children; consequently the great day has not yet arrived.—The message of love has not yet been announced; discord and contention yet disturb the peace of the family home;—where then is the fulfilment of the prediction? But the God of truth has spoken the word by his servant; He that never errs has said, that the coming time shall teem with salvation; let it then be our endeavour to fortify ourselves in faith, and to deserve the blessings which will follow the footsteps of the Lord whom we are seeking, and of the messenger of the covenant whom we desire.

May it be the will of our Father to guard us on the path of life which we are pursuing; may He pour out his blessing over us, and yield to each man the good desire of his heart; and may He to his chosen nation especially give his grace, and enlighten their hearts,

even in the lands whither they have wandered for their manifold transgressions, that they may learn to discern between the true and the false, the good and the evil. May He deliver them from the snares of the ungodly, who constantly aim to rob them of their hope and their support, the law which He himself has given; so that all the house of Israel, and after them the whole race of man, may be found worthy in his eyes, to send down from heaven Elijah the angel of the covenant, and cause his anointed one to come to gladden us with peace and salvation. Amen.

Nissan 7th. } 5596.
March 25th. }

DISCOURSE XLIX.

THE MESSIAH.

No. VI.

To THEE, O king of glory! do we lift up our eyes; on Thee, O Father of mercy! do we call, to grant us salvation and peace, and to cover us and all the earth with the panoply of thy grace and bounty. O, our God! Thou hast said, that the earth should be full of the knowledge of Thee, and that no nation should lift up sword against nation: do Thou now, according to thy promise, and arrest, by thy potent might, the strife and contention which at present desolate the earth; and remove speedily the yoke of oppressions

which the humble ones are suffering from the hands of those stronger than they! And cause Thou, the redeemer, even David thy servant, to be sent unto us to gladden our hearts, and to bid those rejoice who now mourn for Zion, the city of thy holiness! May this be thy will, speedily, and in our days! Amen.

Brethren!

Let us once more revert to the elucidation of the doctrines connected with the Messiah, or as we have explained the word in our last lecture, to the man, descended from David, endowed with high intellect and virtue, deputed, or anointed, by the Most High to work out the changes of which the prophets speak as impending over the outward world.—It is evident, even without resorting to the Bible for proof, that, consistently with the truth of God, the people, whom He once chose of all nations as the depositary of his will and law, cannot, by any possibility, be excluded from participating in the benefits resulting from the mission of the high functionary whom all their seers taught them to expect. For to argue otherwise would, to say no more, be impeaching the wisdom of God, for having selected a family of men as the recipients of the highest trust, who would, on the first and greatest opportunity, utterly fail of answering the end intended, and show themselves entirely unworthy of the great grace vouchsafed unto them. For, what other reason could there be to deny them a share in the happiness to be brought through the Messiah? would God be unkind to those, once called his children, without a very powerful motive for their rejection? Let us pause one moment, and see what this

powerful motive can be, even supposing that one should exist. It cannot be a denial of the Deity himself; for, amidst all the apostacies of the Israelites, we never yet saw the period when a total neglect of the Deity and his commands took place, and relying upon the historic records of the Bible, there was accordingly no time in all the seasons of trouble and destruction, when our nation was utterly forsaken by the Lord; and convulsions, which overthrew and annihilated other empires, compared to which our state was hardly as a small corner, merely purified our people, and even if diminished in number by every passage through the smelting furnace, a hardier, a firmer, a purer body always emerged after every trial. All this proves that mere sinning will not deprive us entirely of the grace of God; we must therefore seek for the cause of such a supposition farther even than the nearly universal apostacy witnessed in the days of the kings of Judah and Israel. It must be the rejection of the Messiah when he comes. But it requires only a small share of penetration to discover that this refusal to receive God's anointed can never take place. We ask: "To whom did the prophets speak, when predicting the redeemer?" The Bible answers: "To the sons of Israel." "To whom again did God speak when saying, that even in the land of their enemies He would never forsake them, though their sins had banished them from their lovely inheritance?" The Bible again answers: "To the sons of Israel." "To whom were the prophets like Moses promised? in the midst of whom walked in humble guise the man that never tasted the cup of death? whose ancestors stood at the foot of the burning

mount to receive the law of the King of glory? whose forefathers were called the friends of God?" "None others than the people of Israel!" And yet we should assume, that they alone should, of all mankind, wilfully place themselves out of the pale of God's mercy by rejecting the messenger, whom He purposed sending from the beginning, nay, while they ostensibly profess to be guided by the ordinances of the law which He gave to them as his will! can blindness be carried farther? And assuming this as possible, what can be thought of the wisdom that selected such a people of all others as the guardians of the law? Is it possible to suppose, that the religion to be upheld by the advent so much desired can be spread to the limits of the earth, whilst its first possessors are false to their trust, in even rejecting the messenger, and thereby incurring a punishment greater far than was suffered for apostacy and the worship of idols?—We could multiply questions like these, and endeavour to strengthen conviction yet farther; but what needs it to adduce arguments to prove that the sun sheds light at the noon of day, and what proof do you require, that God's wisdom is unerring, and that his means always accomplish their object? We must therefore dismiss the absurd idea, that the Messiah is not for the Israelites, and we must assume that the son of David will also to our people bring salvation and peace among the rest of the sons of Adam.

Let us now see of what our nation stands in especial need, and what have always been the causes of our weakness. We need, more than any thing else, an entire and perfect union; since our present existence can hardly be called national, being dispersed, as we

are, in unimportant numbers all over the globe—oppressed in many countries, tolerated merely in others, and regarded as equals in but few indeed. To such a state of degradation have we, the people of God, been reduced, and it is thus we suffer the burden of our iniquities. Now, it is not to be denied, that to a nation, that has been once independent and free, it is of vast importance and of paramount interest to enjoy an equal share of liberty of action as formerly, and hence no efforts, however heroic, are held as too dearly applied, that will produce this result. And tell a conquered people to cease longing for a reinstatement of their government, because their new rulers govern with justice and moderation: and you will be answered, that nothing can compensate for precious laws abolished, for homes desolated, and for altars overturned. This sentiment of regret has never been a stranger to the captives of Judah; and many have been the tears that flowed for thee, O holy Zion! many have been the sighs heaved at remembering thee, O sacred city of Salem! and let thy children, land of Israel, land of loveliness! wander whither they may, unto thy distant shores they will turn in their prayers, and bless the dust in which sleep their glorious fathers!—their trusty prophets!—the friends of their God! And should we not weep over our fallen state, when we see the ordinances of the Lord held in light esteem? when in no one country the code of Moses is obeyed? when as slaves or as citizens our brothers are constantly enticed away to forsake the religion of their fathers? when, alas! the arts of our adversaries on the one side, and the open violence of the persecutor on the other, have been

equally effective in drawing away many a faint-hearted Israelite from his hope—from his only stay of salvation? Shall we not mourn, that in the land of Moriah the stranger worships in his false belief, and that the cities of our beloved land are the dwelling of robbers, the abode of ravenous beasts? that the fields are deserted, and the plains rendered desolate? Shall we not call in our agony on the Lord, when we are told, that to us, of all men, the rights of man must be denied, that the children of the faith are unworthy of trust—destitute of honour—solely because they build their faith on one God—on one law? Shall we not pray to Him, who is alone the Lord of vengeance, to require the blood, the innocent blood, of his servants that has flowed in streams unmeasured, because they would not forsake Him, their Father and God?—Ay, surely, these and many more have been the consequences of our dispersion and dismemberment, and it is, therefore, reasonable to hope, that, since God will send the Messiah to restore peace on earth, He will also cause our dispersions to be gathered and united again in a land which was once their own, the land of Palestine in which their forefathers dwelt. Upon a farther search into our history we will discover, that nearly all the calamities, to which our nation has ever been subject, had their origin in a want of unanimity among ourselves, and the absence of a devotion to God. If now all the dispersed Israelites should be assembled together in one body, and there should be a diversity of interests prevalent among them, no permanent union could be thought of. And if even a political unity of feeling should exist, but a rebellion towards God be encouraged: the peace thus upheld

would be of small advantage, whilst every act of ours would anew call down the oft-experienced vengeance of Heaven. We would do this again just as at the time of Jeroboam, when the division of the kingdom into Judah and Israel caused at first contention among the rival chiefs, and when the latter, in order to make more complete their severance from the family of David, induced their subjects to throw off the yoke of the divine law, for which expulsion from their land and banishment to distant climes were the doom of the wicked and apostate race. Would it then be wise in God to gather the Israelites without removing these great stumbling-blocks? Assuredly not, especially as we always see, that the actions of God on earth never fail of effecting a useful end. We must therefore come to the conclusion, that at the appropriate time a reassemblage of all the children of Israel will take place, and that the returning captives will be without envy towards each other, and all devoted, heart and soul, to the service of their Maker.

You will observe, brethren, that in all these deductions we have not quoted a single Bible-text; and still we may freely challenge the exposition of the want of a single connexion between the argument and the conclusion arrived at, although merely deduced from common reasoning. But these views, thus proved to be reasonable, are also perfectly consonant with the doctrines and the evident text of the prophecies; and according to our usual method, we will now proceed to adduce a number of parallel passages from various prophets, all tending to prove the intention of God to preserve the Israelites amidst their captivity, and to restore them again to their

former land, united under one head and devoted to the laws given through the servant, faithful in the whole house of the Lord.—Moses, the father of the prophets, speaks thus (Deut. xxx. beginning at verse 1): "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou reflectest on them in thy heart, among all nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, so that thou returnest unto the Lord thy God, and hearkenest unto his voice, according to all that I command this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul: that then the Lord thy God will restore thy captivity, and have mercy upon thee; and He will again gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If thy outcasts be at the outmost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from there will He fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee unto the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, in order that thou mayest live." In the same book (xxxii. 36) we read: "For the Lord will espouse the cause of his people, and bethink himself of his servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and the guarded and the fortified are no more." In these two striking passages we are distinctly told, that a state of things, like the one now existing, would one day be experienced; that it should be "a day of trouble to Jacob;" but that nevertheless the remnant

would not be cut off; but that at the end of days a change is to come over the face of the desolation, so that the captives should return from the most distant climates, and, converted to the service of the Lord, live peaceably in their own land, worthy servants of the Most High, and eminently deserving of his favour. But before this could come to pass, all the previously announced evil must have occurred, even to the extent of an entire dismemberment of the people, in small bodies, all over the earth; although at the moment the prophecy was spoken they were travelling under one leader in the desert of Arabia, separate and distinct from every other nation. Without any farther reference every one must be struck with the exact state of the Jews so pointedly foretold, and the precise accomplishment in many respects of the blessings for obedience, and the curses for rebellion so emphatically announced. Without even the concurrence of other prophets, the events actually experienced would stamp the prediction of Moses as true and proved; but the confirmation becomes doubly strong, when we draw in the testimony of other messengers, all speaking before the banishment had wholly or partially come to pass.—Let us refer to Isaiah (xi. beginning at verse 10): "And it shall happen on that day, that he of the root of Jessé, who shall stand as an ensign of the people, to him shall nations come to inquire, and his resting-place shall be glorious. And it shall happen on that day, that the Lord will put forth his hand again the second time to acquire the remnant of his people, which shall remain from Asshur, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from

Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will lift up an ensign unto the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel; and the dispersed of Judah will He collect together from the four corners of the earth!" The prophet here speaks in confirmation of Moses. He first alludes to the king Messiah, him of the root of Jessé, and asserts, that he should become a teacher, not alone to Israel, but to the whole world besides; not that he should go after them, but that they should seek him out, to inquire of him the way of salvation, as was also said in the second chapter: "Out of Zion shall go out the law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem." The next assertion is, that the Israelites should not be left in a scattered state, but that from every place, whithersoever they may have wandered, they should be called together into one body. The Bible mentions the countries of Asia and Africa, and even the islands of the sea, those distant regions, where at that time none of the scattered of Judah dwelt; since the destruction of the kingdom of Judah did not take place till long after the death of Isaiah. It must also be taken into account, that only a remnant were to return! a remnant, understand! for the greater part should perish in the enemy's land. How fearfully has this been verified! Had our numbers not been thinned by the wars of extermination waged for the hundredth time against us, and by the destroying persecutions which spared neither age nor sex: our nation would by this time not have been the insignificant body it now is. But still a remnant has been left, an indestructible remainder has survived, and this bare handful, compared to the rest of mankind,

continues to this very hour the special object of care to an overruling Providence, and is the subject of the outpourings of the divine spirit over men, the wisest and most virtuous with whom the world was ever blest.—After having stated the intended gathering from the four corners of the earth, Isaiah continues: "Then shall depart the envy of Ephraim, and the adversaries of Judah shall cease; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not assail Ephraim." In chapter li. 11, we read: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with song, with everlasting joy upon their head; gladness and joy shall they obtain, while sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Chap. lii. 2: "Shake thyself free from the dust, arise, sit down, O Jerusalem! loosen thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion! For thus hath said the Lord, For naught were you sold, and without silver shall you be redeemed."—Verse 6: "Therefore shall my people know my name, therefore on that day, that I am He that speaketh it: here am I. How beautiful are upon the mountains the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that publisheth peace, that announceth tidings of happiness, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth.' The voice of thy watchmen,—they raise their voice, together shall they shout; for eye to eye shall they see, when the Lord returneth to Zion. Break forth in song, shout together, ye ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem." Chap. lix. 19: "And they shall fear from the west the name of the Lord, and from the rising of the sun his glory—and unto Zion shall come the redeemer,

and unto those that return from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out the mouth of thy children, nor out the mouth of thy children's children, saith the Lord, from now and for ever." What has just been adduced from the two prophets only will fully maintain our positions, that though the Messiah is certainly to be the harbinger of peace to the whole earth, it never entered into the contemplation of the seërs of God to exclude the children of the covenant from a participation in the promised happiness. For what does Moses say: "And the Lord will circumcise thy heart, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, in order that thou mayest live." Does this not prove that on no account would the Almighty suffer his people to reject the chosen redeemer? "That thou mayest live," says the prophet. Does not this presuppose that no crime deserving of rejection should be done by the Israelites with regard to Messiah? And says Isaiah: "And unto Zion shall come the redeemer, and unto those that return from transgression in Jacob." If even there could be a doubt about the meaning of the word Zion, which as some suppose means all such as have been brought by grace under the dominion of the Lord, to which explanation, let it be remarked, we would not much object, if taken merely as an accommodation and not as argument: still the words "And those that return from transgression in Jacob" would fix the prophecy upon the literal descendants of the patriarchs especially, for it is they who have transgressed, and have

drawn upon themselves the indignation of the Lord. Besides the concluding words of the covenant "From now and for ever" confirm the construction of the passage in favour of the theory we are advocating in our address of this day. For at the time of Isaiah the spirit of God and his word were only in the mouth of the Israelites, consequently when he says, "from now"—from the moment I am speaking—it must be referring to those blessed with the possession of the Word, and of these possessors he says, "that the spirit should never depart from them;" consequently to them too, and for them the redeemer must come; and to their Zion, the city of Jerusalem, he will repair to plant there, on the mountains of Israel, the standard of salvation, to which the nations shall flock. The restored Zion, the rebuilt temple, must be possessed by those who, sold for no price, are to be redeemed without silver; they who for their sins were expelled from the most lovely inheritance, will be restored to their home by repentance and good deeds. In their restored land also they shall dwell for ever, with none to make them afraid, and the storm of desolation, and the besom of destruction, which have so often passed over them, shall no longer be felt, for no one that is unclean of heart and defiled by wickedness will any longer pass among them.—And to illustrate this farther, we will extract one more passage from Isaiah, chap. liv. v. 8:

בשצף קצף הסתרתי פני רגע ממך ובחסד עולם
רחמתיך אמר גאלך ה׳: ישעיה נר׳ ח׳:

"In a little wrath did I hide my face for a moment from thee; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith thy Redeemer the Lord,"

And he continues emphatically: "For as the waters of Noah is this unto me; as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more pass over the earth: so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith He that hath compassion on thee—the Lord."

Can words be more forcible? can love be more ardent? can truth be more unwavering, than are here presented to us?—Israel forsaken? Jacob rejected? As well may the mother forget her offspring, cease cherishing the child of her own body: yea, if these even could be forgotten, God would not forget us; never would He deny us the hope of his salvation. But verily the redeemer will be sent to comfort the captives of the lonely people, who have so long borne the contumely of a proud world, because they had forsaken the law of their Father, who redeemed them from bondage to be his people and treasure!

May thy kingdom, O Lord! be speedily renewed, and do Thou bless us with the advent of the prince of peace, under whose shadow we may live securely among nations, pleasing Thee by the righteousness of our lives, so that we may ever deserve thy care and love! Amen.

Elul 13th.
Aug. 26th. } 5596.

DISCOURSE L.

THE MESSIAH.

No. VII.

LORD OF GLORY! we call on Thee for protection! How long yet shall thy children suffer? how long yet shall thy inheritance sojourn in the land of the stranger? May it be thy will, O gracious Father! again to have compassion upon those that have so long borne the weight of thy wrath, and gather them from all nations, and unite them as one people on the mountains of their heritage, even the land of Israel, which Thou hast sworn to give unto their fathers and their children after them, as an everlasting possession. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In our last address, on the subject of the expected deliverer, we adduced concurrent testimony from two prophets, to prove that a great benefit is to result to Israel from his mission.—In continuation we must observe, that the disposition to forsake the covenant of the Lord has always been the source of the greatest misfortunes that befell us, ever since we were a people. If now a time should come, when a greater love and a more uniform adherence to the law of Heaven were to be cultivated: then it is also reasonable to suppose, that the happiness of the nation so acting

would be more amply secured than by any other means known to us; since "the ways of religion are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." And that such a time is impending, appears clearly from the prophecies of Jeremiah, who says (iii. 14–17): "Return, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am become your husband; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you to Zion; and I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and intelligence. And it shall come to pass, when you multiply and increase in the land in those days, saith the Lord, that men shall not say any more, 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord,' nor shall it come any more to mind; nor shall they remember it any more; nor shall they mention it; nor shall any thing be done any more with it. At that time shall they call Jerusalem, The throne of the Lord: and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; and they shall not walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart." The meaning of this prophecy seems to be, that at the time of the advent, God will select the few that have escaped the many persecutions and the great hardships of a long captivity, and restore them to their former land, where He will appoint rulers who, mindful only of justice and truth, shall govern the people after the holy law, which is, in truth, knowledge and intelligence. In those days the Israelites shall multiply and increase, and none shall disturb them; and no one shall any longer swear by the ark of the covenant, for the whole congregation, in all their assemblies, shall be holy; wonders shall be wrought every where;

God's majesty will appear at all places; and to the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem shall flock the nations to worship the holy Name, the ONE God; and no more shall wickedness of heart mislead them to sin. How strangely, how strongly, does this agree with the annunciation of Isaiah! and the coincidence is the more remarkable, since the phraseology is so entirely different. In farther confirmation of the foregoing, let us examine the thirty-first chapter of the same book, ver. 1: "In those days, saith the Lord, will I be the God for all the families of Israel, and they shall be unto me for a people." Ver. 27–34: "Behold days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man and the seed of cattle. And it shall come to pass, that just as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to overthrow, and to destroy, and to do harm: so will I watch over them, to build up, and to plant, saith the Lord. In those days shall they not say any more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge; but every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge. Behold days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will make with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, a new covenant; not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day that I took hold of them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they have broken, although I was become their husband, saith the Lord; but this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I place my law in their inward parts,

and upon their heart will I write it, and I will be unto them for a God, and they shall be unto me for a people. And they shall not teach any more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord;' for they all shall know me, from the least of them even unto their greatest, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I not remember any more."—In order to present a connected view of the message spoken to Jeremiah, I have extracted a considerable part of it, although against our usual custom to make so long a quotation. It will be perceived, that we are promised two things: the first, temporal security in our own land; and the second, a renewal of the covenant which the Israelites had broken, much to the displeasure of their God. The first promise requires at present no exposition, having spoken on the subject on former occasions; but concerning the new covenant a few words, by way of explanation, may perhaps be useful. The words are: "Behold, days are coming, when I will make with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, a new covenant." The parties are stated, not to be the nations of the earth, not a spiritual Israel, but the actual descendants from the line of Jacob, the houses of Israel and Judah. If a spiritual nation were meant, the prophet would not have particularized; for the double family appellation is not applicable to a spiritual symbol, but only, as said, to the people that was at that time divided into the two contending divisions. Says the Text: "Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers," for this covenant was neglected over and again by the parties to be benefitted by its institution; but a new contract,

a new agreement, of a more permanent kind, is to be entered into, to observe the laws emanating from God, or in the words used in the Bible: "I place my law in their inward parts, and upon their heart will I write it." What is this that is to be written?—the new covenant? or if you will, a new law? by no means—the law of God which was given in former days, this is to be written upon the heart of the people; by which figurative phrase is to be conveyed, that henceforward the ordinances and statutes of the law should be indelibly fixed in the affection of our nation, so that they should never depart therefrom. Nay, more, the knowledge of God and his precepts shall be so universally diffused, that no one shall need to ask for instruction concerning his duties; since all shall be taught by the Creator himself. Where is here to be discovered the smallest allusion or the most remote reference to a new dispensation, or a change in the commandments which were to be, and are, immutable? It is idle to assert, that the words *covenant* and *law* are synonymous; for if this were so, why do we always find the former used when a contract between parties is meant, and the latter when duties to be executed are spoken of? And so we read in Genesis xvii. 8–10: "And I will give unto thee, and to thy descendants after thee, the land wherein thou sojournest, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting inheritance; and I will be their God. And God said to Abraham, But thou, for thy part, shalt observe my covenant, thou and thy descendants after thee, in their generations. This is my *covenant* which ye shall observe between me and between you, and between thy descendants after thee, Every male child among

you shall be circumcised." Ver. 21: "But my *covenant* will I establish with Isaac." So also in Exodus xix. 5: "And now if you will hearken to my voice and observe my *covenant*, you shall be to me a dearly beloved people more than all nations; for all the earth is mine." In these passages, it will be seen, the word covenant is used, although applied to the law, in the sense of a contract, by which the people and the father of this people, Abraham, were to be bound by certain stipulations, in return for which they should receive the more immediate and constant protection of God. But a much stronger exemplification we find in Leviticus xxvi. 14–15: "But if you will not hearken to me, and will not do all these commandments; and if you will despise my statutes, and your soul loathe my ordinances, so as not to do all my commandments in that ye break my *covenant*." Here, the not doing the commandments is termed breaking the covenant, or we are told, that the people by not doing the duties of religion, which is their part of the contract, would forfeit God's love and favour, which, as his part of the contract, was to be bestowed in return for obedience.—So also: "And He told you his covenant, which He commanded you to do, the ten commandments." (Deut. iv. 14.) And: "It shall come to pass, in reward for that you will hearken to these ordinances, and observe and do them: that the Lord will observe to thee the covenant and the kindness which He hath sworn to thy fathers." (Ibid. vii. 12.) Farther: "And they shall say, Because they had forsaken the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them, when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt; and they went,

and served strange gods, and bowed down to them, gods which they did not know, and which He had not assigned to them." (Deut. xxix. 24–25.) It will be perceived from the various texts from the Pentateuch just given, and which might be multiplied at pleasure, that the words *Berith* covenant, and *Torah* law, are not the same; and, consequently, when the prophet speaks of a new covenant, he refers to a new contract or bargain, to use a well-known homely phrase, which should be so strongly adhered to, that no infraction of the law, which is to be strictly observed on the part of the Israelites, should ever take place any more, as had been frequently the case before the time of the end, and for which the infringers of the agreement between their God and themselves had drawn upon themselves the wrath and indignation of Heaven. But now, when no longer ignorance of the details of the law will be found among the people, when all will know the Lord from the greatest to the least: then will the Almighty be their God, and they shall be his people, over whom He will watch with particular care, and whose sin He will have forgiven.

Of the other benefits, to result from the coming of Messiah, Jeremiah speaks no less than his great predecessor, Isaiah. To place the matter in a strong light before you, we will extract one passage referring to the punishment, and another relating to the consolation of Israel (xvi. 9): "For thus hath said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place before your own eyes, and in your own days, the voice of gladness, and the voice of joy, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride." Yet in chap. xxxii. 36–41,

we are told: "But now therefore, thus hath said the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city, which you say is given up into the hands of the king of Babylon through the sword, and through the famine, and through the pestilence, Behold I will gather them out of all the countries, whither I have driven them in my anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them back again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell in safety; and they shall be unto me for a people, and I will be unto them for a God; and I will give unto them one heart, and one manner, to fear me at all times, that it may be well with them, and with their children after them; and I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from them to do them good on my part; and my fear will I place in their heart, so that they may not depart from me. And I will be glad over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land in truth, with all my heart and all my soul."—And then continues Jeremiah (chap. xxxiii.), after adverting to the destruction which Jerusalem was at that moment suffering through the Chaldeans: "Behold, I will bring it (Jerusalem) healing and cure, and I will cure them; and I will display unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause to return the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel, and I will build them up as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their guiltiness, whereby they have sinned against me: and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it (Jerusalem) shall be to me for a name of gladness, a

praise and an honour with all the nations of the earth, who will hear all the good that I am doing unto them (the Israelites): and they shall dread and tremble because of all the good, and because of all the happiness that I prepare unto it. Thus hath said the Lord, Yet again shall there be heard in this place, of which ye say, 'It is ruined, without man and without beast,' even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,—the voice of gladness, and the voice of joy, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of those that say, 'Give thanks unto the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, because to eternity endureth his kindness,' of those that bring thanksgiving—offering unto the Lord; for I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord. Thus hath said the Lord of hosts, Yet again shall there be in this place, which is ruined, without man and even without beast, and in all its cities, an habitation of shepherds who cause their flocks to lie down. In the cities of the mountain, in the cities of the lowlands, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the environs of Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks yet pass under the hands of him that counteth them, saith the Lord" (6–13). In continuation, the prophet speaks of the Messiah by name, calling him David, and predicts that security shall prevail all over the land. The announcement just recited is also confirmed by Zechariah (viii. 2–5): "Thus hath said the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Zion with a great jealousy, and with great fury am I jealous for her. Thus hath said the

Lord, I return unto Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called, 'The city of truth,' and the mount of the Lord, 'The holy mount.' Thus hath said the Lord of hosts, Again shall there sit old men and old women in the streets of Jerusalem, and every one with his staff in his hand because of their multitude of years. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in her streets." (Ibid. 7–8): "Thus hath said the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the country of the setting of the sun; and I will bring them back, that they may dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be unto me for a people, and I will be unto them for a God in truth and in righteousness." (Ibid. x. 10): "And I will bring them back again out of the land of Egypt, and out of Assyria will I gather them; and into the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them, and it shall not be sufficient for them." (Ibid. 12): "And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and in his name shall they ever walk, saith the Lord."

These extracts clearly prove, that the restoration of Israel is to be accompanied by a change of the heart, which change will produce in them an acquiescence in the decrees of Heaven and a uniformity of sentiment and action. Ezekiel, one of the seers of the Lord, also confirms the above messages in different parts of his book, and speaks of a union and good-fellowship that are to prevail among the people of the Lord, and of an entire dependence they are to show towards their Maker. These are his words: "Therefore say to the house of Israel, thus hath said

the Lord Eternal, Not for your sake do I this, O house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy name, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye are gone. And I will sanctify my great name which ye have profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord Eternal, when I will be sanctified through you before your eyes. And I will take you from among the nations, and I will gather you out of all the countries, and I will bring you unto your own land. And I will sprinkle upon you clean water, and you shall be clean: from all your impurities and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will remove the heart of stone out of your body, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And my spirit will I put within you, and I will cause that you shall walk in my statutes, and that my ordinances ye shall keep and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be unto me for a people, and I truly will be unto you as a God." (xxxvi. 22–28.) And in continuation we read (xxxvii. 21–28): "And speak unto them, Thus has said the Lord Eternal, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they are gone, and I will gather them from every side, and bring them unto their own land; and I will make them into one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be to them all for king, and they shall not be any more two nations, nor shall they at any time be divided into two kingdoms any more: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, and with

their detestable things, and with all their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and I will cleanse them, and they shall be unto me for a people, and I will be to them for a God. And my servant David shall be king over them; and one shepherd shall be for them all; and in my ordinances shall they walk, and my statutes shall they observe and do them. And they shall dwell in the land which I have given to my servant Jacob, in which your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they and their children, and their children's children for ever, and my servant David shall be prince unto them for ever. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, an everlasting covenant shall it be with them; and I will preserve them, and multiply them, and I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for ever. And my residence shall be with them, and I will be unto them for a God, and they shall be unto me as a people. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, who sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary will be in the midst of them for ever more."

How any one professing a veneration for the prophecies of the Lord can at all misapprehend the obvious import of these consolatory messages, is indeed surprising, and our astonishment will not be a little increased, when we discover that the same sentiments are expressed by other prophets besides those already cited. For so says Hosea: "And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, and with the fowl of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and the bow, and sword, and war I will break away out of the land, and I will cause

them to lie down in safety. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; and I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in justice, and in loving kindness, and in mercy; and I will betroth thee to me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." (ii. 20–22.)

Joel says: "And you shall know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain; and Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall not pass through her any more." (iv. 17.)

Amos predicted: "And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel; and I will plant them upon their soil, and they shall not be pulled up any more out of their land, which I have given unto them, saith the Lord thy God." (ix. 14–15.)

So also Zephaniah: "At that time will I bring you back, even at the time that I gather you; for I will make you for a name and for a praise among all the people of the earth, when I bring back your captives before your eyes, saith the Lord." (iii. 20.)

From the whole of the extracts adduced it will be clearly perceived, that, when the time of the Lord arrives, the following must take place: *First*, the Israelites will be assembled from all the countries where they are now scattered.—*Secondly*, division and contention among themselves will not take place any more.—*Thirdly*, they are to dwell securely each under his own vine and each under his own fig-tree, undisturbed by any foreign foe or invader.—*Fourthly*, plenty and fruitfulness are to prevail in all the land of Israel, which is to be far more extensive than it was at any time before.—*Fifthly*, the rule of the Messiah will prevent the exercise of injustice and oppression.—And *lastly*, the universal acquiescence in the

will of God will preclude the recurrence of the pouring out of the wrath of Heaven over the Israelites, or, in the words of the prophet, "The iniquity of Israel will be sought and shall be no more, and the sin of Judah will not be found."—These in short are the advantages which are to result to our people from the advent of the anointed of the Lord; and although the prophets furnish yet more ample and minute details of events to occur in those days, still as the subject has been so long kept under your consideration, it is necessary to bring it to a close at present; I do not, however, relinquish the idea of resuming the discussion at a later period of more leisure, when I trust to be able to treat it more clearly and intelligibly than I have done at present.

We will now proceed to elucidate the last inquiry which we proposed: "What benefit is to result to the world at large from the mission of the son of David?" This question has been almost answered already incidentally, when discussing the other points in the course of our investigation; but still we will add a few especial elucidations drawn from the prophets.—In a preceding lecture we remarked, that the desired object of many philanthropists, the prevalence of universal peace, will then be accomplished; but what is more, not peace alone, but a universal religion is also to prevail, and the knowledge of God and his commands is to spread all over the earth.—For so says Isaiah: "And many nations shall go and say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of God

from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the people, and decide for many nations; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-knives; no nation shall lift up the sword against nation, and they shall learn no more war." (ii. 3–4.) "And the Lord shall be exalted alone on that day. And the idols will he utterly abolish.—On that day a man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which have been made for him to worship." (Ib. 18–20.) "They shall not injure and they shall not destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And it shall be on that day, that he of the root of Jessé, who standeth as an ensign for the people, to him nations shall come to inquire, and his resting-place shall be glorious." (Ibid. xi. 9–10.) "And I will display a sign on them, and I will send from them those that escape to the nations Tharshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, Thubal and Yavan, the distant islands that have not heard my fame, and have not seen my glory, and they shall proclaim my glory among the nations." (Ibid. lxvi. 19.)

And so also says Jeremiah: "O Lord my strength, my protection, and my refuge, on the day of trouble! unto Thee nations will come from the ends of the earth, and say, Nothing but falsehood had our fathers inherited, vanity in which there is no profit. Can a man make to himself gods? which are yet no gods. Therefore, behold, I will let them know, at this time will I cause them to know my hand and my might, and they shall know that my name is the LORD." (xvi. 19–21.)

Micah, in the commencement of the fourth chap-

ter, fully confirms the prophecy of Isaiah, with regard to the cessation of war, and says, emphatically, that there should be none to make the peaceable inhabitants afraid; and Habakkuk, in almost the words of the same prophet, announces: "For the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (ii. 14.)

But of all the prophecies relating to this great and eventful change, none is more explicit than Zephaniah, who says: "Terrible will the Lord appear over them; for He will cause to vanish all the gods of the earth: and then shall prostrate themselves before him every one from his place, all the isles of the nations." (ii. 11.) And after adverting to the judgment of God, he continues:

כי אז אהפך אל עמים שפה ברורה לקרא כלם בשם ה׳ לעבדו שכם אחד : צפניה ג׳ ט׳:

"Yea then I will change unto the people a pure language; that they may all call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord." iii. 9.

It will thus appear that the will of God has been announced as desiring to bring all the nations under his rule, that all shall call upon his name and serve Him alone. This is farther confirmed by Zechariah, who says: "And there shall come many people and mighty nations to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord." (viii. 22.) So also Malachi (i. 11): "For from the rising of the sun even unto his going down my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is burnt and there is offered to my name, even a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, saith the Lord of hosts."

David speaks of the same change, when saying: "All the nations that Thou hast made shall come and bow down before Thee, O Lord! and honour thy name." (Psalm lxxxvi. 9.)

Yes, brethren! the time is coming, when all nations will be brought to acknowledge none but the God that made the heavens by his might, and the earth, and all that fills it, and serve Him alone in truth and sincerity. We cannot determine whether the whole of the Mosaic law is to be obeyed; but it is most likely, to judge from the language of Zechariah, that a part only of the commandments, such as are best suited to the gentiles, will be imposed on them. At all events the religion of Heaven will be made the standard of right for all nations, who are to learn "of the ways of the Lord." But as yet many people walk in ignorance; "they bow to vanity and emptiness, and pray to gods that cannot help;" yet one after the other will have the light made to dawn upon them, till in yon glorious time the truth will be fully revealed. Already has one entire class of men a religion analogous to ours; they declare the Lord to be God alone; but they found their belief upon the sayings of a false prophet. Another class, smaller in number, but more endowed with the blessings of education, have separated themselves from the believers in a division of the deity, and now believe in one God; but they also put faith in a person whom we acknowledge not as a prophet sent to speak in the name of the Lord. But still the light is spreading; ay, despite of the efforts of men, truth will ultimately triumph, when "the glory of God will be revealed, and all flesh shall see that the mouth of the Lord

hath spoken it." Ay, onward will be the march of light, till it will be verified what was foretold: "And I will display my greatness and holiness before the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord." Higher and higher will the reverence for God rise upward; more and more families will be taught to honour his holy Name! superstition will yield her empire! false worship will sink into oblivion! unbelief will stand abashed! and truly, when our redeemer, David, son of Jessé of Bethlehem, is sent, the universal law will be everywhere acknowledged, truth will dwell in all places, and in every house there will be worshippers of the Lord, in every bosom there will beat a heart that acknowledges no prophet as the teacher of a heavenly law except Moses the chosen of the Lord, and no God save our almighty Father and Ruler, who spoke all these words through his servants, and faithfully kept his promises to those who hope for Him, and long for the time when He will dwell again in Zion. In those days and in that period will be fulfilled what the prophet predicted: "The Lord shall be One, and his name ONE." And all mankind shall then acknowledge, that the Everlasting alone is King, Creator, and Preserver, and to Him alone appertain the power, and the glory, and the dominion!

This is the reign of the Messiah, and this is the change which is impending. In the whole of the exposition laid before you the Scriptures alone have been consulted, and the subject was allowed to unfold itself gradually to your reflection; nothing unreasonable was brought forward in the course of the argument; and thus, by the favour of Heaven, I have

been permitted to add another demonstration to the well-established fact, that reason and revelation are not inconsistent. It is now time to draw my labours to a close; and let me breathe the fervent hope, that the pains and care, which have been very great, bestowed upon so interesting a subject, may not have been without a commensurate share of benefit. For myself at least this has been the case; and the more I entered into the study of the scheme of revelation, the more became my astonishment and veneration rivetted; astonishment at the consistency of the whole chain of predictions constantly increased; and veneration for that great Being that spoke all, and has also fulfilled, as we daily see, grew more ardent; for in all our captivity, and in all our wanderings, it was his holy Spirit that ever upheld us. This beneficence will also guide the whole world, and ultimately all will like us be led to fall down and worship before Him, who is the Lord alone, unending and omnipotent, and without whom there is neither God, Saviour, nor Redeemer!

Sovereign of the universe! Upheld by thy bounty, sustained by thy grace, we have been preserved before Thee unto this day! O let us experience thy favour henceforward, and guide us through thy knowledge to thy service. And let thy spirit breathe comfort into our souls when we are afflicted, and cause all the sons of men to be enlightened of thy wisdom; so that they too may be brought to thy worship, as are the children of thy servants, to whom Thou didst promise, that Thou wouldst be their God, and never forsake them even in their captivity and sufferings.—O do now display thy glory, as Thou hast said, and

build up the temple where thy name is to dwell for ever, and send the redeemer, even thy anointed one, to heal the wounds which have been struck on us for our manifold transgressions. O do it for the sake of thy holy name, that has been profaned among the nations! and let all the world see, that thou art God in Israel, and that there is none like Thee, O Thou, who art our Creator, God and King! Amen.

Kislev 23d. } 5597.
Decem. 3d. }

NOTE.—The discourses on the subject of Messiah must not be viewed as a complete treatise, but merely as an illustration of the doctrines connected therewith. I must also distinctly state, that I hold myself alone responsible for the arguments and sentiments advanced, and that whatever of error and deficiency may be discovered should not be laid as a fault against our religion, but solely to my inadequacy of doing the subject complete justice. I would likewise state, that when I began the discussion, I thought of finishing it in one, or at most, in two lectures; but by degrees, becoming more interested than I myself at first expected, I continued the work during several months, and had at length to finish it, almost abruptly, because I had to draw the matter to some sort of a conclusion, before these volumes had entirely gone through the press. I do not, however, ask to be excused for gross errors, which I trust will not be found; but only to receive the reader's indulgence, if he should not find all he may wish or expect from me. But, as I have said in the text, I do yet hope of resuming the discussion at some future period; and in the meantime I would be greatly obliged for any hints, advices, or corrections from any one, whether Israelite or not; as I think, that by a mutual interchange of opinions, candidly and temperately exhibited, the truth and holiness of the divine law will be best proved to the satisfaction of the many, and the happiness and welfare of all.

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT

THE SYNAGOGUE MIKVEH ISRAEL,

IN BEHALF OF THE

FEMALE HEBREW BENEVOLENT SOCIETY,

OF PHILADELPHIA,

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1836—HESHVAN 26, 5597.

ORDER OF SERVICE:—Prayer—Lesson on Charity, chapter lviii. of Isaiah—Annual Report—Address—Psalm xc., in conclusion. After which a liberal collection for the funds of the charity was taken up.

PRAYER.

SOVEREIGN of the universe! In thy house assembled, we approach thy mercy's seat to ask thy blessing upon our humble endeavour. We know, O our Father! that our strength is utter weakness before Thee; and that our wisdom is sheer folly before thy wisdom; and that all our virtue must appear imperfection before thy holiness.—We humbly, therefore, beseech Thee to grant us thy assistance in our earnest striving to serve Thee, and cause, O cause, naught but what is pleasing and good in thy eyes to result from our labour. Let thy name be sanctified through us, and may nothing occur through our means, by which others might be led to sin. Open

our hearts to a knowledge of thy law, and remove from us the heart of stone, and give us a heart of flesh, and a spirit willing to serve Thee.—Give likewise to all of us, and to each of thy children, our daily bread, and cause thy blessing to alight upon the work of our hands; so that we may, each and all, receive our maintenance from thy hand which is full, and open, and holy, and ample, and which scatters bounties to all flesh and creatures, that were created by thy potent word; and suffer us not to stand in need of the gifts of flesh and blood, nor of their loans; for their gifts are small, and their shame is great. But, if Thou hast decreed poverty and affliction as our lot on earth: O then give us firmness to bear thy dispensations without repining, and let our sorrows rise up unto Thee, as an atonement for our misdeeds, and hear our prayer in thy holy abode, in order to purify our hearts and to cleanse us from our transgressions; so that, shielded by thy grace, we may live to please Thee, and to merit thy mercy and forgiveness, O Thou, who art our Father, King, and God! Amen.

ADDRESS.

DUTY AND SCOPE OF CHARITY.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

In the report of the managers which has just been read, there have been exhibited to you the proceedings of a number of benevolent daughters of our people, who for near twenty years have, with means

quite inadequate for so noble a purpose, endeavoured to succour the distresses of their fellow-beings. There always has been, and, whilst society is organized as it now is, there always must be, a great share of suffering; and whether the cause be inability to labour, sickness, loss of fortune, or lastly, improvidence even: the sufferers have a claim upon the sympathies and means of those who are blessed with the opportunity and ability of granting relief.—But if individuals be ever so kind, if their hearts are ever open to the calls of humanity: still the poor, especially if he has seen better days, must feel some hesitation to lay his distressed situation open before them, justly dreading a refusal, even allowing that he should not fear, nor need to fear, being treated with unkindness besides having his petition unattended to. If, however, the sufferer knows that a society exists, established for no other purpose, acting from no other motive, than dispensing good to all according to its ability: then he has a fund which he may call his own, and friends in the managers of the charity, who will soothe and solace him, and look into his wants, and relieve them, while the fund for distribution is not totally exhausted. It is, indeed, a pursuit well worthy the daughters of our ancient race, to become as it were the patrons of the needy ones; to enter their humble dwellings, perhaps in the dreary season of blighting winter, and seek out a neglected sister who, like them, may once have been radiant with youthful bloom, shining forth with all the elegance of splendid attire, and attractive by her sallies of wit and her intelligence.—But through the vicissitudes, to which all are liable, sad

reverses have befallen her; one by one her friends have departed; relative after relative was borne to the grave; her worldly substance was swallowed up by unforeseen mishaps; and now, in some distant quarter of a large city, she has been overtaken by the cold chill of winter, with her resources exhausted, and without the ability of earning the merest necessaries of life. The managers of a charity, like the one before us, enter her abode. The cheerful flame again visits her cold neglected hearth; the exhausted larder is replenished; and the lonely sufferer's heart is lightened by the kind and cheerful converse of the friendly sisters, and to Heaven ascend the grateful thanks, and upon the benevolent is poured out the blessing of a soul snatched from the gloom of despair, now rejoicing over the timely assistance, sent almost as was to the prophet of old the widow of Zareptha, to feed him in the days of famine.—But my friends! like the means of the benevolent widow, the funds of our society are also very limited, and often indeed have the managers to husband their resources carefully and sparingly, in order to enable them to grant a moderate relief to all standing in need of their assistance. And in seasons of severe cold their charitable intentions, especially with regard to providing fuel for the indigent, which necessary article is often, as you all know, beyond the reach of the really necessitous poor, who most need it, can only be partially but not adequately executed; since the managers, in order to let none go unassisted, have to divide the means at command in small portions among the many that require aid. It is not to be denied that, prompt to the call of distress, our brethren

always have been, and no doubt always will be, ready to dispense the blessings of benevolence to all who are in want; I only need to call to mind one instance of not very old occurrence, where sojourners and wanderers were amply provided for, as soon as their necessities were made public. Still this does nowise do away with the propriety, the duty I may say, of better endowing a charity like our Ladies' Benevolent Society, and of strengthening the hands of its managers, in order to enable them to permit the stream of their benevolence to flow in a broader and deeper channel. Perhaps, hard thoughts may have been entertained at times, when the relief was not so promptly and amply bestowed as those who interested themselves for the distressed ones thought it ought to be. But it should be remembered that, before any thing is given, it is the duty of the managers to investigate and look into the cases presented to them, to prevent any improper waste of the fund intrusted to their care, and to see that not the least thereof be diverted into improper channels. Nevertheless, after satisfying themselves that the applicant is fully deserving of aid, it often happens that with the best intentions the managers have to stint their charity, much to their sorrow, because of the insufficiency of their means. It is to be regretted that, as appears from the report of the board, a part of their available means derived from interest on a certain investment* has failed this year; and the same may happen again, and be another proof of the insufficiency of human caution and foresight to secure against un-

* The Union Canal Loan.

welcome vicissitudes. The more necessity therefore exists for promptness of action in those charitably disposed. A season is approaching, when in the usual course of events much suffering among the poor must be expected. This is the case in ordinary times, when the Almighty has poured out ample stores over the earth for the sustenance of man. But in his wisdom, which none of us dare to question, He has caused the visitation of stinted crops to fall upon these shores, that have almost uniformly before this teemed with plenty. In addition to this, from the combination of the labouring and producing classes, the price of almost every thing that enters into the use and consumption of a family has been raised to an exorbitant height. It must therefore be self-evident, that there must be many poor, who will not be able to procure their usual portion of comforts and necessaries, if the coming winter should even be but moderately rigorous. But should it hold the earth in its icy fetters with the same severity, and for an equal space as last year: who will be able to calculate the amount of suffering that would ensue? Many persons who now can live, and hitherto always have lived, by the labour of their own hands, will then not be able to do so any more, and unless He who giveth food "to the children of the raven, when they cry" sends them unexpected aid and enlargement: they will have to seek assistance from their fellow-mortals, from those "whose gifts are small, and whose shame is great." Would it then not well befit descendants of Abraham, to arise in time, and to provide the "poor man's treasure" with means, in order that it may bestow its blessings

to all who may need?—The institution, in whose behalf this appeal is made to you, does not so much distribute money as purchase the things needful, which alone are given to its pensioners; and in its managers you have ladies, the wives, sisters, daughters, and relatives of your ownselves, and no encomium need be passed upon them or their exertions to induce you to believe, that whatever is placed under their charge will be well bestowed.—And for what is your bounty asked?—Is it to rear up splendid palaces for the residence of the oppressors of the people? is it to send your substance to feed sufferers in a distant land?—No, it is none of these; you are called upon to remember the poor within your own gates, to succour the distressed that are among yourselves; to cheer the heart of some lonely widow; to illumine with joy the humble home of the fatherless; and to solace the indigent mother amidst her toiling to provide food and garments for her needy offspring. Shall I paint to you the anguish which such a mother must feel, when she looks with dire apprehension to the coming days of wintry frost, with the certain conviction that her unremitted exertions will not provide bread even to her helpless babes? Shall I exhibit her to you despairing, when the last handful of fuel is thrown on the almost dying embers—when the last morsel of coarse food is devoured—when the hungry—half famished—almost naked innocents huddle together on their miserable pallet in a night when fearfully rages without the winter's blast, and drives in the sleet and snow through the open crevices of the almost roofless cottage? Say, shall I lay open this mother's heart, as she in despair calls on her God to

take her, together with her suffering little ones, unto his heavenly abode? Is your charity to slumber, till such a dreadful picture of suffering humanity is absolutely brought under your observation? And yet such objects of distress have been; yes, the poor have perished from want of warmth, from lack of food, while the sons of affluence rolled over the frozen ground ensconced within their chariot of ease, enrobed with the skin of the costly sable; when their table was covered with untasted luxuries; yes, when the winter's chill was absolutely banished from their carpeted halls; when the useless fires blazed within every corner of their splendid chambers; when the wine-cup passed round the social circle; when the merry song was heard, and blithesome music ravished the soul. But will you, beloved friends, be the luxurious rich, the heartless worldlings, living at ease, rioting in pleasure, tasting of dainties, while near you a brother suffers, while in your city a fellow-mortal groans under poverty's weight? No, this may never be; no, the descendants of Israel will not suffer this reproach to rest on themselves! for in all times ennobling charity has characterized our people, and liberality of heart and kindliness of feeling have ever remained a peculiar feature in our disposition,—yea, amidst the persecution of tyrants, amidst the stunning scorn of our oppressors. And what does the law, which we all revere, say on the subject of charity? It commands us to open our hearts to the calls of the sufferers, and to give according to the blessing of the Lord which has been vouchsafed to us. We are commanded, to leave a corner of the field for the stranger, the widow, and

the orphan; the sheaf forgotten in the field must go to the same destination; when the fruit-trees are once plucked, the gleanings must be for the poor; but as now the Israelites no longer are an agricultural people, and as we no longer live in one community secure and isolated, it is still our duty to observe the spirit of these precepts. Let the rich therefore give a corner of his amassed wealth into the poor man's treasure; let the husbandman and merchant, when settling their yearly accounts, drop their superfluous gains into the granary of the Lord, and thus swell their amount of virtues by the small largess which they let fall to the share of their suffering brothers.

Yet charity, to be an acceptable offering to the Deity, should not be a mere unwilling gift, but it should flow spontaneously from the heart of the giver; as we read in Deuteronomy xv. beginning at verse 7: "If there should be a needy one among thee, one from thy brethren, in one of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: thou shalt not harden thy heart, and shalt not close thy hand against thy brother the needy. For thou shalt open wide thy hand to him, and lend unto him according to the want he may want. Take heed unto thyself, lest there be any thing godless in thy heart, saying, The seventh year of release is nigh; and thy eye would thus be evil against thy brother the needy, and thou wouldst not give to him; and if he should call concerning thee unto the Lord, it would be a sin in thee. Thou must give unto him amply, and thy heart must not grieve, when thou givest to him; for on account of this thing the Lord thy God will bless thee in all thy works, and in all the doings of thy hands. For the needy

will not cease from the midst of the land: I therefore command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thy hand to thy brother, to thy poor, to thy needy one, in thy land." From this eloquent passage it appears, that unwilling charity is not what the Lord desires; but we are exhorted to let our liberality be accompanied by a willingness of heart, knowing as we must do, that by whatever we bestow we make a loan, as it were, to our heavenly Father, who will increase our store as a recompense for our hastening to the relief of his children, the poor, our brethren, that are amongst us. In furtherance of this divine behest it has been our custom from time immemorial to form ourselves into societies, and to raise, actually and truly, treasures in the name of the Lord for the relief of the needy. Some of these have for their object the relief of the sick and the burial of the dead; may these be spread into every congregation of Israelites, and their means be blest. Others are to give relief to the portionless traveller, and to bestow largesses unto those that are needy; may the Lord bless these also, and cause them to prosper and multiply in the land. Others are to dispense the blessings of education to the children of the necessitous, and to teach them how to serve their Creator and God, and to walk in his ordinances; may these too be blessed, and may hopeful fruits answer the expectation of their benevolent founders. Others again there are, whose object is to apportion dowerless maidens, and to cause the helpless orphan to dwell in the house of her husband in humble content; may our Father look upon these with favour, and cause many happy matrons to call down blessings upon the friends of their helpless

youth! Others at last there are, that, like our Female Benevolent Society, enter the abode of wretchedness, to look carefully into the wants of suffering sisters and brothers of Israel, and to cause every visit to be an earnest of relief and assistance, to cheer the soul of the afflicted, and to rescue ignorance from the way of destruction. Surely such institutions deserve the benison of Heaven; and those, whom He above blesses, merit the favour of man! Shall, then, our sisters appeal in vain to you, my beloved hearers? Shall your own mothers, wives, sisters, relatives and friends be compelled to tell the suffering poor, that their treasury is empty and their funds are exhausted? May this disgrace never attach to our name; on the contrary, sons of Israel! you to whom the Lord has given his blessing, open your hearts to the appeal of the distressed, before it is uttered loudly in your ears; fill to overflowing the store of the benevolent, and enable them to go on prosperously in their goodly task, and to relieve and to succour all on whom the heavy hand of misfortune may fall.—And you, daughters of Yeshurun! who have so nobly embarked in the cause, go on and prosper, for the Lord your God is with you; go on, scatter consolation into the hearts of the afflicted, and light up with joy the countenance of the mourners; go on, restore warmth and the genial flame to the deserted hearth, and replenish the larder that is exhausted; go on, rescue from sin those whom pinching poverty tempts to transgress; and O forget not the task, most delightful of all, to instruct the young mind, to awaken the tender soul to a knowledge of the Creator, and assist the distressed mother to enable her to rear up the children

that the Lord has given her, a joy to herself, an honour to you, and servants to their Maker. If all thus combine, if our brothers and sisters go hand in hand doing and bestowing good: how joyfully must life then pass away, and how sweetly will then rise to Heaven the incense of thankful hearts, recalled from despair, and taught in their hour of distress, that even to this day our ancient race are true to their pristine virtue; and that they are still worthy of being called the children of the Lord.

Heshvan 26th. } 5597.
November 6th. }

NOTE.—Since the above was spoken, many institutions have been called into being in Philadelphia, especially to relieve the distressed, and to diffuse education. The work of charity and enlightenment goes forward notwithstanding occasional interruptions, and the society too for which the appeal was made thirty years ago, is still existing with increased means, and controlled yet by one or two of its officers of that day, to relieve the distressed and to encourage those who are ready to perish.

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT

THE SYNAGOGUE SHEERITH ISRAEL,

IN BEHALF OF

THE SOCIETY FOR THE EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN, ETC.,

OF NEW YORK,

ON THANKSGIVING-DAY, THURSDAY, DEC. 15, 1836—TEBETH 7, 5597.

ORDER OF SERVICE: —אדון עולם—Prayer for Government—Prayer—Psalm lxvii.—Address—Collection for the funds of the Society—and, in conclusion, יגדל. The whole service, with the exception of the Prayer and Address, was conducted by the Rev. Isaac B. Seixas, Minister of the above Congregation.

PRAYER.

O LORD GOD of fathers! we call upon Thee, to bestow on us the watchfulness of thy providence; for we well know, and we have been taught that before Thee all is naught, and that from thy omnipotence there is no fleeing.—In olden times it was that Thou decreedst punishment against thy chosen people Israel, because they had sinned, and had transgressed thy righteous commandments; and they who thought themselves secure behind their impregnable walls, within their fortresses of strength, were led away

captive before their foe!—And their oppressors too have felt the weight of thy power; and Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, and Rome, they who mocked the sorrows of the children of thy inheritance, have been overthrown, when their day of sorrow came, and all have proved in their turns, that before Thee no mortal power can stand, and that thy will builds up nations, and that, in thy justice, kingdoms perish and are as though they had not been!

But in our own day, too, we have witnessed the manifestations of thy might. For Thou spokest, and the destroyer hastened onward on his message of death, and thousands fell beneath the sword that was drawn over many a devoted land. Ay, and vain were the efforts of impotent men; and on the high mountains; in the barren deserts; on the verdant banks of flowing rivers; on the pathless ocean; in the sunny South, and in the cold of the North, were the slain of thy awful visitation; and we were emphatically taught, that thy goodness alone saved us, that thy mercy alone shielded us, when mortals quailed and yielded in despair the contest against the minister of thy vengeance upon the sinful sons of the earth!

The warning passed on, and the danger was over, and we soon forgot Thee, who hadst delivered us. But again Thou calledst on the curse of war, and lands that weened they were secure in peace and prosperity heard the din of arms and preparation for battle resound in their boundaries, and blood has flowed in streams; because men thought not of Thee, and trusted in their own wisdom and power.—Anon, Thou beheldest how vain men trusted too much in their riches; they imagined that they need not serve Thee,

because their wealth was extensive and their possessions widely spread; but Thou commandedst, and the flames* went forth, and houses that seemed to bid defiance to time, crumbled into ashes in one single hour; human efforts stood aghast, mortal striving was vain against thy power, and thy fire went on spreading and desolating, till the proud were made to feel thy greatness, and till the heart of the arrogant was rendered humble before Thee. For they who in their gay mansions listened in the evening-hour to the sound of the merry viol; the light-hearted who in mirth expected a joyful morrow; the lordly bridegroom, at whose side smiled the lovely bride, saw not the sun rise over their splendour, because one night of desolation had robbed them of all the wealth on which they had built their hopes.—Yet we heeded not, and we wended our way, regardless of thy covenant, reckless of the coming storm; but the land that had been ever fruitful, the soil that had always nourished, have failed to give their return to the expectant husbandman, and the measure of bread has been lessened by the unfruitfulness of the seasons.—Thus we have seen thy workings manifested before our eyes: O do Thou enlighten our souls, that we may bow to thy dispensations, and endeavour to merit again thy favour by our obedience to thy will!—And behold us this day assembled in thy holy house to call on thy sacred name, and to thank Thee, because of the many escapes which Thou hast vouchsafed to us

* In allusion to the great fire that laid waste a considerable part of New York, on the 16th and 17th of December, 1835, fifty-two weeks before the day on which the above was spoken.

and to the other inhabitants of this city; and especially to ask of thy bounty a farther continuance of thy providence and care.—And O Thou, who art the Friend of the stranger, the Protector of the widow, and the Father of the orphan! look with favour upon these thy children, who have met in this thy sanctuary, to devise means of diffusing blessings upon the needy and the suffering, and who in this manner endeavour to imitate thy deeds of mercy. And do Thou with thy spirit of wisdom guide them rightly, so that servants devoted to Thee may spring up as the fruit of their striving, and that they, who are now obdurate of heart and forgetful of thy power, may be led through these to fall down and worship at the foot of thy throne!—And let thy name be sanctified through our humble works, and may our acts of piety, feeble and few though they be, redound to diffuse the knowledge of thy glory, and be the cause of manifold blessing to us and all thy people Israel.—And we farther petition Thee, O Sovereign Lord of the universe! that as through thy kindness this devastated city has been rebuilt with more than its former strength and beauty, Thou mayest also speedily cause the cities of our own heritage to rise from their ashes, and to be rebuilt in security, peace, splendour, and holiness; and that Thou mayest again erect the temple on thy holy mountain, whither the nations are to come and worship Thee alone, O our Father! And let our ears be gladdened and our hearts be rejoiced by the announcement of the joyful tidings, that to Zion has come the redeemer, and that thy blessed Messiah has appeared to unfurl the standard of thy salvation to all nations and all tongues! Amen.

ADDRESS.

ON THE OBJECTS OF CHARITY.

Brethren!

It was in ancient days, when the worshippers of the true God were few, and the mass of mankind sunk in superstition and ignorance, that the Lord of the universe descended in his majesty to give unto his chosen people laws and statutes for their guidance. Centuries have elapsed since that glorious day; empires have risen and empires have fallen; nations were born and nations perished; and still the legacy of Heaven is the guiding-star of Jacob's children, and the revelation from Sinai is still the law which the Israelites obey! Ay—this has been the instrument in the hands of our Father above of preserving us amidst all the sufferings and chastisements we had to encounter, because of our manifold transgressions; and we have been spared, miraculously upheld, amidst the wreck of kingdoms, and the annihilation of entire nations, by this best gift which the Creator could confer upon the works of his hands. And although we have been often rebellious and disobedient to the divine mandates: still there never yet was a time, when the blessed law did not strike a chord of harmony in our hearts; for despite of sin we have remained a faithful people, since the divine revelation has at all times found its defenders among the descendants of the patriarchs, the friends and adorers of the God of heaven and earth!

One of the characteristics of our people, and one which is so strictly enforced in the records of revelation, has always been our kindness to those that need our assistance; and the assembly this day in the house of God proves, that the ancient spirit of benevolence is not extinct among my hearers. For what brings you here? is it to listen to sounds of enchanting music? is it to partake of the viands of some festive board? or is it perhaps to celebrate the achievement of some mighty conqueror? or to do homage at the throne of earthly power? No, my friends! you came hither to be excited to feelings of kindness and devotion; you bent your steps to this holy edifice, consecrated to our almighty Father, to raise your eyes, to elevate your thoughts, to yield your hearts in adoration of Him, and you are here assembled to be prepared to give of the treasures with which you are blest to the poor within your gates, and to assist with your substance and with your counsel the unprotected orphan, whose parents were removed before the charges intrusted to their keeping had reached that age, when they need no longer the watchful eye of the father, and the tender care and protecting mercy of the mother! And well it is that there are those who feel for another's wo! for turn we where we will, we must discover many on whom have fallen the burdens of afflicting poverty, and who suffer ills from which no human exertions are able to extricate them. When the benevolent then looks into their wants, and remembers that the sufferers are men like himself, and that our God demands that he should succour the needy: the glow of kindliness at once warms his heart, and with the hungry the loaf is divided,

and the naked go not away unclothed. And although by such deeds of charity the needy are certainly benefitted: it may nevertheless be maintained that the giver is also blest. For who would be hard-hearted enough, unless he loved gold more than any thing else on earth, and lived only for himself, to enjoy alone the comforts which his means will afford him, if a trifle freely bestowed would tend to alleviate the sufferings of his neighbour? who but the arrogant would be willing to luxuriate alone in the pleasures of science and refined life, if made conscious, that by his exertions many poor might be snatched from ignorance and vice, to become, like himself, an ornament of human nature? Yes, brethren, much as we may excuse ourselves for a neglect of charity, by averring that we are unable to relieve *all* the sufferings, and to remove *all* the evil that come under our notice: it may freely be maintained, that, if concerted efforts were made, if one would take counsel with the other, and proceed hand-in-hand to further the goodly cause, sufferings would be relieved that are now galling and almost force the humble to despair, and evils would be remedied that now threaten at times the subversion of social organization and order.

It was for the furtherance of these objects that the members of the society, who celebrate their anniversary this day, formed the bond of union, to relieve the distresses of the stranger, of the unprovided poor, of the unprotected widow and orphan, and of those who may be overtaken by the rigours of winter without adequate comforts to combat with the severity of the season. In the countries beyond yon great water, that washes the confines of this extensive city, many

of our brethren find themselves unable to procure the necessaries of life by their labour. Or, again, oppressed by tyrannical rulers, because of their descent from the great names of former ages, suffering under the opprobrium of being members of the Jewish nation, they find a longer residence in their native land next to impossible. They hear, that in this favoured clime industry is rewarded by a full and adequate return; they are told, that in these States, which are free, and long may their freedom continue, the sons of Israel are permitted to assemble and call upon their Father in heaven after their ancient manner without let or hinderance. They make therefore every exertion to reach these shores. Behold them descending from the bark that carried them hither; their means are exhausted by reason of long travel; they are ignorant of the manners and the language of the new home they have been seeking: to whom shall they apply? to individuals the burden would become too heavy; and even if some one blest with extraordinary riches and possessed of unbounded benevolence could be found, still his own occupations, which every one must have, would prevent him from giving due attention to the cases of the distressed strangers. But if there exists an institution like your society, they may apply to the persons selected to bestow the charity with a well-founded hope, that every thing will be done to relieve their wants and to aid them with wholesome advice, and to point out the way by which not alone present distress may be relieved, but which will enable them to obtain an honest livelihood for themselves by their own exertions, and perhaps at a later period to dispense the bounties of benevolence

to those who may come after them. And when they find themselves blest with ease and competence, they will thank our God, that He had caused to prosper an association the aim of which it is to do good without hope of reward.

Many a one has been in affluence in days gone by; he had hoped that his latter days would be free from want and care. But who is able to rely with confidence upon the stability of aught in this evanescent world? His fortune was dissipated little by little, from the effects, perhaps, of too much confidence placed in those undeserving of it; or from the suddenness of political changes which caused his well-laid plans to fail; or from the weight of diseases with which he or his family may have been afflicted. Could he, who had seen better days, resort to begging, perchance to be refused and spurned by those through whose villany he was reduced to his present distressed situation? No, not whilst a society exists, which in relieving feels no interest in making the applicant ashamed; which in bestowing need not, will not, publicly proclaim that a fellow-being has been reduced to poverty; which in succouring distress will screen the wounded and tender feelings which the needy often experience. And when in his old days comfort dwells in his house, he will ask the peace of Heaven upon the benevolence that cheered his despairing spirit.

In the day of youthful vigour man treads lightly the path of life. Fortune seems to smile on his enterprise, and he dreads not the coming day of evil. He enjoys life, because of the buoyancy of his heart, and he dreams not that it is incumbent on him to husband his resources and to lay up provision for his

family, because of the coming day of death. But alas! the enemy may be lurking near, although unperceived; and suddenly the youthful aspirant is taken from the midst of his pursuits, and he is borne to the silent, dark, and narrow grave. When living, the world thought him prosperous; but the gay outside deceived them; and when the lonely widow looks into the deranged affairs of her departed husband, she discovers that beggary and want are before her. From a heartless, selfish world, that only laughs with the prosperous, but frowns upon the unhappy, she may not, cannot look for support in her straits; but when the helping hand of a society like ours is near, she has friends who will console and assist her; and when her heart has ceased to mourn, she will lift up her soul to God, and thank Him that He had raised up to her friends in the hour of trouble, of need, and affliction.

But above all do they deserve protection, whose natural guardians have been early removed, who are left, as it were, desolate and lonely on the ocean of life, with no guiding-star to point out the way, with no watchful steersman to guard against the shoals, the rocks, the waves of existence. How many are there thus forsaken! and how many who are lost because of the want of some kind friend to protect and shield them at the very time of life when care and watchfulness are doubly required. It may well comport with the views of the proud and selfish to leave those to go to destruction, who have no wealth to bestow, no favours to grant. But how would they feel, were they to be made conscious that they should die in want, their wives be left helpless widows, and their

children unprotected orphans? And is this end so very improbable to those even who deem themselves firmly seated? Ask the annals of poverty, what are the sons of the great and wealthy? and you will be told, that they are among the miserably poor; and descendants of kings are houseless wanderers, strangers and exiles from the countries which their fathers governed! It may indeed be said, that the higher his prosperity, the nearer man is to his fall. And such a fall! from a proud eminence to the lowest degradation! from the royal banquet to the scaffold, from the palace to the prison! Ought not the rich man then to remember in his prosperity the fatherless and the widow, in order that when his own children and the wife of his own bosom may call, they too shall find fathers and protectors in benevolent friends, —friends, raised to eminence and distinction peradventure by the fruits of the very charity bestowed by him from his useless superfluities in the days of his ease and prosperity?—And ask, who sit among the great of the land? whose advice is listened to among the counsellors and governors? who are they that scatter blessings wherever they go? and you will be told, they are the sons of the lonely widow, the children of humble parents, the orphan who neither had a father's care nor a mother's love, raised by a life of integrity, of virtue, and of kindness, to the proud eminence which they now enjoy. And is it not something animating to the charitably disposed to believe that, by his exertions, some one may perhaps be raised from an humble condition, perhaps from vice and its concomitant degradation, to a sphere of usefulness and happiness? But there are those so

acting; there always have been friends of their species, who disdained not to spend their time and their means, however small, to effect so noble a work. There once lived, in a distant land, a man who walked humbly before his Maker. Industrious he was, but fortune smiled not upon his exertions. It pleased Him, who is enthroned in heaven, to afflict him with sufferings long and severe, almost beyond endurance: yet he repined not, but yielded a cheerful submission to the just decrees of his God. Anon, the wife of his heart was taken away to the realms of bliss, where her virtues will shine for ever, amid the servants and adorers of the Lord; and he was left to struggle on a few brief years longer, to provide by the sweat of his face for the wants of his offspring. But his end also soon approached, before they for whom he toiled were old enough to battle with the world and its dangers. Yet the children of the righteous were not forsaken; and after the father had resigned his spirit in tranquillity, and joy at a release from his long-endured pain and hardship, they each found friends to be to them in a father's place, although his love and tender care could never be compensated by acts of the kindest relatives and indulgent friends. And one there was who, feeble of strength, and often and early subject to bodily disease, was unable to labour with his hands for the support of his weak frame. Was he now left to struggle in hopeless and sickening toil for a scanty and tearful support? No; for there was a man, beloved of God and honoured of all that knew him, who, though blest with but small means, had yet always a mite for those that were needy. He felt for the orphan-boy, took him as his own child, watched

over his youth with paternal care, instructed him in the way of righteousness, and taught him to fear the Creator, and to look to Him for support in all his afflictions. And when the youth needed farther assistance, more than the beloved teacher himself could give; when the light of more extended knowledge was required for his mind: he induced other sons of Israel to lend their aid to finish the goodly work which he had begun. Years passed away, and the orphan sought a home in a distant land, where a relative of his mother offered him the welcome of a father's house: there his efforts have been blest, and those are now his friends, that, but for the assistance of the blessed teacher in Israel, would never have known his name. The benevolent one has gone to his reward before the Father whom he so faithfully served, whose laws he so faithfully taught; and the orphan, who wept over his father's bier as one almost forsaken, now addresses you, and pleads for the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless!

Although it must be admitted that the task of protecting the children of persons not connected with ourselves must be, in a measure, highly laborious and unpleasant, especially if, by previous neglect, their manners should have become corrupted and their minds vitiated: still we ought not to forget, that the children are not to be blamed for the negligence of their progenitors, and that, if they are vicious and stubborn, proper means should be employed to cure them of these obstacles to moral improvement. Of all means which are likely to effect this end, none seems to me more promising than an extended system of useful, scientific and religious education, of

which all the children of persons of our persuasion should be permitted to partake, not so much a free-school, but one open to all,—to the wealthy for a moderate contribution, and to the poor for whatever they can give, or without any price whatever, if their means will not permit them to pay. It must be apparent to the most casual observer, that many of the evils to which society is exposed proceed from two great causes, first, the want of all information; secondly, the want of *correct* instruction. Absolute ignorance will be conceded on all sides to be very pernicious, as such a deficiency will leave the mind open to be influenced by all impulses which a corrupt world may instil, and to be ruled solely by passions and desires to which the best of men are subject, but which they keep down by moral government. But if we come to examine the bad consequences arising from a want of correct instruction, we will soon find that they are fully as pernicious as the effects of total ignorance. Take for instance a young man conversant with all the learning of the schools; imagine him to be accomplished in the arts of riding, dancing, music, and painting; add to these as many other things as you please, but leave out a careful religious training, which is most likely the only subject either slightly touched upon or altogether pretermitted: what, I would ask, can you expect from the heartless, finished gentleman, as he is termed? Does he bear love for God?—by no means, this was not included in his course of discipline. Does he look upon his acquirements with meekness? is he humble? is he modest? not at all; for he was praised for his knowledge in his own presence, and he has not yet learned that

others can be as wise as himself.—Does he love his fellow-men? no, not he, for they are all his rivals, they stand in the way of his preferment, or else, they are too low, too mean, too much beneath his notice. And what are the effects of such an education?—ask the beguiled maiden, whose sinful course has driven her from a father's home; ask the deceived associate, who relied too firmly upon the word of his supposed friend; ask the heart-broken mother, when she laments too late that she did not teach her son to adore and fear his Maker and to walk in his statutes, as his fathers had done before him! It is needless to expatiate at greater length upon a proposition so self-evident. And as Israelites cannot gain a knowledge of their religion from strangers: it is evidently a duty incumbent on them to provide teachers of their own who, besides being capable of imparting useful knowledge and elegant accomplishments, shall also be qualified, both by character and information, to teach the holy religion we profess. There are abundant materials in this city, the chief residence of our brethren in America, for the formation of an institution on Jewish principles; and doubtless, if sufficient encouragement were held out, men of distinguished talents would soon be found, who would gladly assume the hopeful task of rearing up our youths and our maidens in the knowledge and the service of their Creator and God. And if, in addition to this, associations should be founded, whose aim it would be to procure employment for our young men without a profanation of the Sabbath; who would endeavour to elevate the character of our people by making of our poor something more useful than itinerant traders: a

blessed spectacle would speedily be exhibited, of our community being regenerated from many faults laid to its charge; for our houses of worship would be filled with devout, attentive adorers; the Sabbath of the Lord would become a delight to many, now strangers to its blessings; the family circles on the festivals would be again completed; and in short we should be distinguished for something more than merely a successful pursuit of wealth; and no more would attach to our name the reproach of our being a people bent on the acquisition of earthly goods and forgetful of our permanent happiness.—And never tell me, that it is impossible to earn a livelihood without transgressing the divine mandates; for how is it that our forefathers lived at ease and respected, in countries where they were subject to oppression and maltreatment? How is it that so many even here find time to serve their heavenly Father, and yet are blest with all that their hearts can desire? It may be that there are great difficulties in the way of a strict religious course in large commercial cities, where the competition in every employment is so very great; but still it seems to be utterly impossible to justify the so general forgetfulness of religious duties on these grounds, especially as honest candour would seem to warrant the assertion that concerted exertion would do a great deal towards combating, if not entirely removing, the evil.

Both the objects just mentioned, the diffusion of religious knowledge, and the promotion of a stricter conformity to religious observances, seem to be properly within the province of your society. For their laws say:

"The funds of the society shall be applied to the following purposes:

1st. Relief to the orphans and widows of deceased members.

2d. Elementary and religious education, and trades, to such orphans, and to the children of indigent Jews, giving a preference to those of indigent or deceased members. And in all cases, where evidence of superior talent in any child shall manifest itself, to extend, if practicable, a liberal education.

3d. Aid to all Jews in distress under such regulations as may hereafter be prescribed."

It will be seen from the foregoing, that the founders of the society contemplated such an institution as I have been urging upon your attention; for it is not to be supposed, that religious education could be obtained at any other than our own schools, nor is it credible that, after a child has been religiously educated, he should be bound out to a stranger, and compelled to eat of food prohibited by the law, and to labour on the days which, as he was taught, are consecrated to the service of Heaven.—This surely could never have been the intention of the benevolent, who associated themselves to diffuse the blessings of charity. Let them therefore rouse themselves to establish the good work which they have contemplated; let them draw the children of the rich, of the moderate in circumstances, and of the poor, into one common school, where all may uniformly be taught the religion of our Father in heaven; and if it should then unfortunately happen, that indigence or early bereave-

ment throw any child upon the bounty of the world, the managers, as fathers of the orphan, will not have to contend against ignorance, and against vice, brought on by the not knowing the way of life and salvation! It is to be hoped that, should such a seminary be commenced, none but worthy men should be appointed as instructors; and that, on the other hand, the wealthy would not disdain to let their children mix in fellowship and brotherly love with the offspring of the humble; for who knows, but that the descendants of the affluent may in after-life be indebted for aid to those who were inferiors to them in youth; besides it would teach them to place a proper value upon the fleeting possessions of our earthly existence, when they discover that the poor too have feelings like themselves, and are endowed by the Creator with the same intellect, and are from their worth deserving of respect and kindness. And if teachers should come among you, O then treat them with proper regard, you who are fathers and mothers in Israel; endeavour to second their exertions to benefit your children, and let these hear nothing from you which could in the least tend to induce them to esteem lightly their spiritual parents! Can any one doubt that happy fruits would be the result of such a pious course? And what can be the end, if something is not done, and speedily done, to arrest the growing evil, and to check the forgetfulness of the divine mandates, which has spread its poison so fatally for many years over the younger part of the American Jews?

Doubtless the society, that wishes to take charge of the poor, the orphan, and the widow, has not means

enough to accomplish all its benevolent plans; but year after year its funds are accumulating, and when its wealth has greatly increased, it then will be able to do whatever the founders at first purposed. But shall the rising generation in the mean time languish and thirst for the word of God, and find no one to satisfy their desire? Shall the poor apply in vain to an exhausted treasure, when sickness oppresses his humble home, when penury checks his hopeless labour? Shall the orphan be cast abroad, with none to feel compassion for his helpless state? Shall the widow, she, perhaps, who in better days bestowed her bread to the hungry and clothed the naked—shall she in her old days be allowed to suffer, because there is no one to plead for her, when distress overtakes her?—Never be this said of men, of Israelites! There are here now present those who are greatly blessed with means beyond their wants: let them open their hearts, and give freely unto the treasury, whence the sufferings of many may be relieved, through which many may be rescued from ignorance, from ignominy, and irreligion! They, whose substance is not so extensive, let them also give according to their abilities, and let them be assured, that no loss will accrue from the bounty bestowed to benefit the people of the Lord, the poor, the needy, and the afflicted. —And, lastly, the poor also, let them give their trifle, and let them be convinced, that though the gift be small, the ever-kind Father will yet look upon the heart, and bless the sincere offering that is made in his service. If all thus contribute, and if all will lend their aid and counsel to further the goodly work —blessing and prosperity will attend the efforts of

your society, and they who are now but few in number (which it is hoped may this day be increased manifold) will be the supporters of the poor, the props of the widow, and the fathers of the fatherless. And will not our God bless his servants that thus endeavour to glorify his holy NAME? Assuredly, for these are the words of the inspired one, who says:

הביאו את כל המעשר אל בית האוצר ויהי טרף בבתי
ובחנוני נא בזאת אמר ה' צבאות אם לא אפתח לכם
את ארבות השמים והריקותי לכם ברכה עד בלי די:
מלא' ג' י':

"Bring ye all the tenth part into the treasury-house, that it may serve as a provision in my house; and prove me, I pray you, in this, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and shower down you blessing without measure." Malachi iii. 10.

Here, friends and brethren, you have the distinct announcement, that benevolence will not be followed by temporal loss, besides that it brings imperishable treasures. Do you, then, prove the Lord in this! open your stores of wealth, fill up his treasury to overflowing, and strengthen the hands of the stewards in God's household, that they may be enabled to give provision to the poor who live in the world, his land; perhaps the Lord may see it and receive your doing in favour, and cause much good to result from your efforts; and perhaps He may stay, in his mercy, the devouring flame, that it consume not again the labours of many years; perhaps He may decree

blessings on the crops that are growing, and send plenty, and health, and contentment to the inhabitants of this city and of this country.—Come! rouse yourselves, men of Israel! rise in your strength, sons and daughters of Yeshurun! join in with the band of the faithful who have not relinquished the task of ministering to the wants of their fellow-mortals! and let not this day pass before you have all resolved to serve the Almighty, the everlasting One our God, and to love and to fear Him all the days that you may live on this earth; so that you may be favourably received in the embrace of the ever-blessed Father, when your race is run, when you will receive the recompense meet for those who remained true and firm to the commands of the law, undismayed by temptation, unswayed by interest, loving and adoring the Being who is God alone, and whose rule is from everlasting to everlasting.

May the God of our fathers be with you all, and bless, guard, and save you, and give you peace and contentment here below, and happiness and satisfaction in yonder mansions of bliss, when your souls have sped hence, to receive at his judgment-seat their portion with the righteous who have obeyed his will; and may you rise again to unending life and imperishable happiness at the day, when the slumberers in the dust shall be quickened unto life before the Father of all! Amen.

Tebeth 1st. } 5597.
Decbr. 9th. }

NOTE.—Several of the measures recommended above have been carried out since then in New York, and the free schools as well as

the orphan asylum, the latter the work in part of the society before which I spoke at the above date, show that the good work is at length progressing. I was asked, on the spot, to open the school recommended by me, but the invitation could not be accepted, for various reasons.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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